

DREW WESTEN: GOP ADS AND THE RACIAL ID

**SPENCER
ACKERMAN:**

**What Baker-
Hamilton
will mean
for 2008**



THE AMERICAN **Prospect**

LIBERAL INTELLIGENCE

HOW POPULISM WINS

It wasn't mushy
centrists who retook
Congress, it was
progressives like
Ohio's **Sherrod Brown**

The Economic Message

JACOB S. HACKER AND RUY TEIXEIRA

The Realigning North

THOMAS F. SCHALLER

The Death of Free Trade

HAROLD MEYERSON

TARA McKELVEY: THE TURMOIL AT THE ACLU

PHOTO BY JON ZORN
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"We got to where we are because we didn't run as Republican-lite—we ran as economic populist Democrats."

— SHERROD BROWN



SPECIAL ISSUE

Election 2006: How Populism Wins

November's election wasn't just a stunning victory for the Democrats. It also confirmed the new appeal of an old approach: championing the interests of regular Americans. Herewith, a look at the geography, class structure, and subliminal secrets of the new Democratic electorate, and at its dissimilar—but populist—new senators and representatives.

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The People, Yes

AS OUR COVER PACKAGE OF ARTICLES SUGGESTS, the Democrats triumphed in 2006 not just because of Iraq and Republican blunders running the gamut from Katrina to macaca, but because Democrats at last ran as economic populists. Although the economy was

not considered Topic A by the pundit class, nearly every Democrat who picked up a Republican seat articulated the economic distress felt by regular people.

Populists get bad press. *The New York Times*, exploring the surprising role of populism in a front-page piece November 12, wrote an odd headline: “For Incoming Democrats, Populism Trumps Ideology.” But populism *is* an ideology—the ideology of using government to help regular people and counteract the financially powerful.

Populism can have an ugly face when it scapegoats immigrants for the pocketbook distress of ordinary folks, rather than placing the blame where it belongs—on the politically dominant financial elite. Lou Dobbs’ bestselling book, *The War on the Middle Class*, is marred by streaks of nativism, which also infected the original populist movement of the 1890s. But the press too readily puts all populism in this category, just as it disparages class warfare—as if top-down class warfare were not what we have today in America. The progressive populism of the New Deal was salutary class warfare of regular Americans against economic royalists. This brand, which resonates in the politics of a Sherrod Brown, is precisely the antidote to nativism.

NOW THAT DEMOCRATS HAVE RECOVERED their economic souls, can they deliver? Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid have identified the low-hanging fruit: Raise the federal minimum wage. Require a genuine prescription drug benefit

under public Medicare. For Democrats, it is heads—I win, tails—you lose. Bush can sign these bills, bending to Democratic leadership on pocketbook issues. Or he can veto them, nicely demonstrating the difference between the parties.

But these measures don’t fundamentally change the dynamics of the deregulated, privatized, and globalized economy that has been undermining economic security for three decades. To reverse the misfortunes of the broad, working middle class, Democrats would need to reinvent the managed capitalism that thrived between the late 1940s and early 1970s. That would mean re-regulating much of the economy, and tying trade to decent social standards, so that a managed economy at home is not undermined by laissez-faire globally. This is not as radical as it sounds. Bill Clinton actually included labor standards in two bilateral trade deals with Cambodia and Jordan, though neither had adequate teeth.

However, populist Democrats run up against not just Republicans, but many in their own party. Ironically, free-traders Rahm Emanuel, who heads the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and Chuck Schumer, his Senate counterpart, helped scores of fair-trade

Democrats like Sherrod Brown oust Republicans and gain influence in the Democratic caucus.

Opinion elites are alarmed by this influence. The *Times* editorial of November 13, “Truth About the Trade Deficit,” warned against Democratic “protectionism,” adding, “The surest way to make American businesses more competitive—and workers more secure—is to resolve the nation’s health-care mess. And the government needs to update and strengthen the safety net for workers who are hurt by global competition.”

But while universal health insurance and other social protections would be a fine start, they would not reverse the drag on wages caused by the alliance between slave-labor factories in China and U.S. retailers like Wal-Mart. They would not address other nations’ mercantilist policies, willingly enabled by U.S. trade deals, that subsidize the export of entire American industries. Legislating public subsidies for well-paid human-service jobs to replace good factory jobs lost to trade and automation would require not just a stronger “safety net” but a quantum leap in social outlay. And Apollo-scale industrial policies to create new technologies and new high-wage domestic jobs would require Washington to disavow the very World Trade Organization it invented.

There’s nothing nativist about a trade regime that helps workers gain more of the fruits of productivity.

But the United States would first need to change its core trade strategy from one dominated by corporate interests to one that addresses the well-being of citizens, just as our domestic social compact once did. It will be invigorating to watch the freshman class of populists lead on these issues but it will take even more of a political transformation before they prevail. **TAP**

— ROBERT KUTTNER

*There’s nothing
nativist about a
trade regime that
helps workers gain
more of the fruits
of productivity.*



*To this day,
the [Democratic]
party is not able
to address the war
for what it was.*

— ELI ZARETSKY
NEW YORK, NY

Not Just Retirement

OLD AGE HAS ITS ADVANTAGES. Three paragraphs in Ann Crittenden's book review entitled "Do This for Mom" [October 2006] dealing with Social Security are wrong. It is only divorced spouses who have to have been married for 10 years before they can collect dependent benefits on the basis of the former spouse's earnings. Before 1977, it was 20 years, thanks to Congresswoman Bella Abzug who authored the bill that made that change. This is true whether the person is a parent or not.

Secondly, it was not the National Women's Law Center that "put forward many years ago" the earnings sharing proposal. I and my colleague, Jane Sherburne, devised this proposal in the 1970s, and it was introduced in Congress by my husband, Donald M. Fraser (Democrat, Minnesota 1963-78) and stayed alive as a proposal until the two-earner family became the norm in American life. The proposal was based on the theory of the joint income tax for married persons—that the earnings belong to both spouses—and was designed to protect mothers primarily who stayed out of the workforce

to raise children as so many of us did then. It did get opposition from men for exactly the reasons Crittenden stated: It would have reduced men's benefits.

I also fail to see the "anachronisms" in Social Security "that penalize middle-class and poor mothers alike," as Crittenden states. About half of all U.S. women age 65 and older would be in poverty if it were not for Social Security. One can assume most of these women were mothers. Today about 4 million children and thousands of parents collect benefits every month based on the death or disability of men and women covered by Social Security. There are income restrictions on the parents of these children so it is primarily the poor families who receive benefits for both parents and children. Without Social Security many of those children would be on welfare.

The real problem is that most people don't understand that Social Security is not just a retirement program. It is insurance against death and disability as well. During the recent debate over privatizing Social Security, it was estimated that young families with children would need a \$400,000 life insurance policy

and a \$350,000 disability policy to replace the current guarantees under Social Security.

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Ann Crittenden responds:

I thought it was clear that I was referring to divorced spouses when I wrote that "no one" could claim dependent benefits unless married for at least 10 years—thanks to Arvonne Fraser for making this totally clear. Ms. Fraser also rightly claims partial credit for originating the idea of spousal sharing of Social Security credits, thereby reinforcing my point that this is an idea that was originated by liberals.

As for her failure to see any anachronisms in Social Security, here perhaps old age is not an advantage. I fully recognize that Social Security is all that stands between millions of older women and poverty. But it doesn't seem right to me that the system still gives a person zero credit for time spent raising a young child—even though the future of the system itself depends on children's future earnings. Anyone who is a full-time parent for some limited period of time should earn Social Security credits in their own right for that work. Those zeroes are anachronistic, as is the need for most mothers to claim Social Security to this day as "dependents."

What Opposition?

BRUCE ACKERMAN AND
Todd Gitlin call Tony
Judt's claim ["We Answer to

the Name of Liberals," November] that liberals have "acquiesced in President Bush's catastrophic foreign policy," "nonsense on stilts." Supposedly, they and their numerous cosigners "consistently and publicly repudiated the ruinous policies of the Bush administration."

If, by "publicly," Gitlin and Ackerman are referring to dinner parties, then I must agree that liberals were vocal. But if the term refers to political opposition of the sort that existed in previous wars, then Judt's charge stands.

Of course, there were exceptions. Especially striking, however, is the uncritical support of the war by the leaders of the Democratic Party—Tom Daschle, Dick Gephardt, Joe Biden, Bill Clinton, John Kerry, and the like. To this day, the party is not able to address the war for what it was.

The truth is that Judt has put his finger on something fundamental. Without a coherent left, liberals are spineless. Empty proclamations of principle do not change this fact.

ELI ZARETSKY
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Correction: In our November issue, "A Republic, If We Can Build It" was written by Richard M. Valelly and not Richard N. Valelly. We apologize for the error.

Letters to the editors should be sent to letters@prospect.org or mailed to The Editors, The American Prospect, 2000 L St., NW, Suite 717, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Up Front



THE ODD COUPLE

THE 110TH SENATE WILL BE COMPRISED OF 49 REPUBLICANS, 49 DEMOCRATS, AND TWO INDEPENDENTS—more specifically, two Jewish men in their mid-60s from New England states who will caucus with the Democrats but hold out the possibility of breaking with them. I speak of Connecticut's Joe Lieberman and Vermont's Bernie Sanders.

Those wondering when we might expect the Independent Caucus to put forth its own issue agenda could be in for a long wait. Lieberman's election-night proclamation that his was a victory of "the mainstream over the extreme" was aimed more at Ned Lamontist Democrats than the GOP. By contrast, avowed socialist Sanders' declaration that "we are sick and tired of the right-wing extremists who have been running this country" presumably didn't pertain to crunchy liberals. Lieberman wasted no time after the election making clear he was " beholden to no political group." Sanders, too, stressed his independence, but did so by explaining his intention to push Democrats to pursue left-wing policies that went beyond merely ending Bush's tax cuts and restoring domestic spending ("That's the easy stuff!"). One of these independents was long touted as a possible replacement for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld; the other's election garnered a celebratory article in the *People's Weekly World*. We could go on. Their differences extend down to matters of personal style—Sanders is avuncular, scruffy; Lieberman is prim and a touch school-marmish. They're not just the outliers but the Oscar and Felix of the new Senate majority.

— SAM ROSENFELD

ACCENTUATE THE NEGATIVE

In the initial round of election post-mortems, one conservative after another offered up a humorous (if poignant) explanation for the GOP's crushing losses: the party's abandonment of rigid right-wing orthodoxy regarding government spending. That seemed hard to top for sheer perversity, but then beleaguered National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Tom Reynolds rose to the challenge. He explained to reporters that Republicans lost ... because they ran insufficiently negative campaigns. "I accept the fact that you have good people lose in hard-fought battles, but I can also unfortunately show examples of some of my colleagues who did not disqualify their opponents at all, or too late," Reynolds said. Those Republicans—such famous namby-pamby softies on the campaign trail. When will they learn?

WHATTA MANDATE

Though George W. Bush's presidency should be said to have exploded the notion that electoral "mandates" exert a meaningful effect on political officials' behavior, a look at the aggregate vote totals for November's midterms is still instructive. On the Senate side, economist Brad DeLong pointed out that about 32 million Americans voted for Democrats compared to about 24.5 million for Republi-

cans—a 13.4 percent margin of victory. As for the House, Columbia statistics professor Andrew Gelman compared the 2006 return to the much ballyhooed Republican Revolution, and noted on his blog that "[t]he Democrats received 54.8 percent of the average district vote for the two parties in 2006, whereas the Republicans only averaged 51.6 percent in 1994." Consider it a mandate, then—whatever that might mean.

THE TERRORIST VOTE: CRUCIAL

The American people spoke on November 7, and the ballots they cast sent a decisive message of aid and comfort to **Osama bin Laden**. As



George W. Bush had told reporters just days before the election, "However they put it, the Democrat approach in Iraq comes down to this: The terrorists win and America loses." Never to be outdone, Dick Cheney had explained to FOX News that the jihadists believe "they can break the will of the American people" and "that's what they're trying to do"—by, of course, electing Democrats. The American public listened, and voted accordingly. Let us now genuflect before Speaker Nancy al-Zawahiri, Ways and Means Chairman Khalid Shaikh Rangel, and, of course, Rahmzi Emanu-El of Illinois, the first-ever Jewish member of al-Qaeda.

ERIC PALMA; LANDOV

THE QUESTION: DID THIS ELECTION AUGUR A PERMANENT STRUCTURAL REALIGNMENT OF THE ELECTORATE?

"Yes. The decades-spanning Southernization of the GOP has finally wrought its complement: consolidation of Democratic control in the North."



— **Jules Max**, Junior Deputy Editor, The American Prospect

"I tend to blanch at such overly sweeping claims. Local and temporal contingencies play the biggest role in elections."



— **Madeline Pressley**, Junior Managing Editor, The American Prospect

"Nonsense on stilts! This was merely Bush fatigue. And hasn't David Mayhew definitively debunked realignment theory already?"



— **Mara Lurie**, Junior Director of External Relations, The American Prospect

HONEST ABOUT LYING

At the president's November 8 press conference, a reporter cited the "America loses" line and asked the president what had changed to prompt his new calls for engaging constructively with the Democrats. "What's changed today is the election is over," was Bush's reply. The "Of course I lied, there was an election happening!" defense was, in fact, a running theme of the press conference. Reporters pressed Bush to explain why he had told three journalists a week prior to the election that he had no plans to replace Donald Rumsfeld. Bush first answered that he didn't "want to inject a major decision about this war in the final days of a campaign. And so the only way to answer that question and to get you on to another question was to give you that answer." Another journalist followed up to confirm that the president did in fact knowingly have plans to replace Rummy when he assured reporters before the election that he didn't. "No, I did not" know Rummy was a goner, said Bush. "And the reason I didn't know is because I hadn't visited with his replacement—*potential* replacement." Well that clears things up.

NOTED WITHOUT COMMENT

For the record: On October 18, a reporter in Iowa had asked John McCain what his reaction would be if Democrats took over the Senate.

"I think I'd just commit suicide. I don't want to face that eventuality because I don't think it's going to happen."

INFLUENCE-PEDDLING

There were other elections of note in November. For example, before *The Atlantic* released its "100 Most Influential Americans" cover story, it conducted an online poll to see how some of the candidates ranked among readers. Ronald Reagan came out on top. George W. Bush scored about the same as Martin



Luther King Jr. **Oprah Winfrey** only snuck in at number 10. She should demand a recount.

UNCHECKED, UNBALANCED

Before the midterm elections, Congress helpfully provided official backing for the administration's then still-rogue approach to holding, trying, and prosecuting terror detainees. The congressional sanction has evidently put the wind back in the sails of administration

lawyers, who, in simultaneous filings on November 13, both argued before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit that Guantanamo Bay prisoners have no constitutional rights because they are being held overseas *and* claimed before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit that immigrants arrested *in the United States* for suspicion of terrorist activities can be held indefinitely and without appeal to civilian courts. The Bush presidency: not over yet. **TAP**

PARODY

Rush Limbaugh, Still Liberated

"Now I'm liberated from having to constantly come in here every day and try to buck up a bunch of people who don't deserve it, to try to carry the water and make excuses for people who don't deserve it." —Rush Limbaugh, November 8, 2006

The second week of my liberation still feels great. Republicans, you stink. I always said so, at least quietly inside my head. Plus, you're ungrateful, and I'm done being taken for granted. I've worked too hard and too long to earn a reputation for moral and intellectual debasement to be treated this way. I was even fully and publicly on board with your proposed bill empowering small business owners to drive around with firearms and randomly shoot children under four. And now you tell me you weren't serious.

So let me be honest, for once. I'm completely inspired by Nancy Pelosi's "Six for '06" agenda. The government should absolutely be allowed to negotiate prices for prescription drugs—I can tell



you from experience that you've got to haggle if you don't want dealers to rob you blind. And Pelosi's pledge to expand Pell grants is positively Churchillian. Churchill, of course, is a hero of mine, because he reminds me of Jimmy Carter. And, to pay for it, let's by all means preserve the capital gains tax. I never did mind that tax, actually.

So, yes, I've been a Democrat all along. But I know you all have one last question. What about Abu Ghraib? Did I really think it was just like a frat house, as I claimed? Well, actually, yes. My own hazing experience at Omega Gamma Psi involved a fairly rigorous program of naked human pyramids, death, and sodomy. It also left me with a severe case of obesity and mental retardation. So I don't think inmates at Abu Ghraib experienced such a bad thing. They received the best preparation possible for a great future: a career in right-wing radio. And that isn't just the massive dose of hydrocodone talking.

— T.A. Frank

The Reverse K Street Project

BY MARK SCHMITT

IN NOVELS, FILMS, OR REAL LIFE, THERE'S REALLY only one Washington story: Newcomer comes to town, full of idealism and ready to change the country, but soon encounters the permanent government that defines what you can't do and whom you have to deal

with if you want to try. The permanent government might be octogenarian committee chairs, ruthless staffers, or—more recently, as the power of the committee chairs has waned—the lobbyists.

It's the story of the Carter administration, the Clinton administration, and almost every new congressional majority. Even Republican right wingers claim it's their story that "we came to change Washington, but Washington changed us." (That one's not true, but we'll get to that.)

The Democrats elected this November have a rare opportunity, if they can appreciate it, to rewrite this story. They have the opportunity to put the lobbyists back in their proper place: as claimants on government, with a right to be heard, but no longer embedded in government or setting its limits.

Every newly elected Democrat inevitably will begin the next Congress with meetings and fund-raisers with those who are paid well to represent the companies and institutions in his or her district or committee's jurisdiction. Those lobbyists will quietly make sure that it's known how much money they put into the new legislator's campaign. Indeed, as the Democratic takeover looked more and more likely, every political action committee and lobbying firm in Washington scrambled to make sure that at least half its contributions went to the Democrats. The late rush of money to the winners helped bury the Republicans in their last days.

But even a cynical politician should

know that late money that comes in when you already look like a winner needs to be discounted. It's the early money that makes your candidacy possible that really counts. And for most of the new Democrats, that money came from other sources, mostly from individuals passionate about changing the direction of the country.

There are lots of good-government reasons for Democrats to ward off the lobbyists. And there are good political reasons as well: "Corruption" turned out to be a more decisive issue than most mainstream Democratic strategists had expected, and a dramatic move to change the way the House of Representatives in particular does business—as Speaker-to-be Nancy Pelosi promised long ago—will help cement the voting public's sense that they voted for change and got it. Reducing the influence of corporate money—not through restrictive campaign finance laws such as McCain-Feingold, but by using matching funds and tax credits to enhance the value of small contributions—will make it easier for candidates to run without depending on the usual suspects.

There is an even more pragmatic reason to keep the lobbyists at bay: It gives Democrats freedom of action. The last Democratic majority in the House was

constrained by the deal engineered by former Democratic Majority Whip Tony Coelho (recounted in Brooks Jackson's book *Honest Graft*), in which the party sold out to K Street in exchange for what it thought would be perpetual control of the House. The deal limited Democrats' range of action—and for nothing, since they lost the House three elections later anyway.

If Democrats are able to free themselves from the lobbyists, they will have Republicans to thank for it. First, because Republicans showed that it could be done. Far from letting Washington change them, the Republicans stood up to the corporate lobbyists and said, play the game our way, or don't play at all. The essence of the K Street Project, besides demanding that lobbyists hire and contribute only to Republicans, was its insistence that the lobbyists subsume their own clients' interests to those of the Republican Party. The lobbyists didn't corrupt the party; the party brought them into its own corruption.

From which the Democrats can learn two lessons. First, it showed that a party in power could exercise that power and bring lobbyists to heel. That's especially true if the party has other sources of

financing, from people actually inspired by the party's agenda, as the Republicans did and Democrats now do as well. Second, it means that the new majority owes almost nothing to K Street, and if Democrats want the freedom to develop a broad and popular agenda to allay the economic anxieties of most Americans, they

should keep it that way.

The Democrats should not replicate the K Street Project, but they have the opportunity to reverse it. In this reverse K Street Project, lobbyists have the right to be heard but no special claim, and the Democratic leadership sets the agenda, confident that if lobbyists don't like it, there are other ways to raise money and promote the party's policies. **TAP**

*Since Republicans
colonized K Street,
Democrats are
free to do good:
They owe it
almost nothing.*

Lessons for Democrats

BY CONGRESSMAN BARNEY FRANK

THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON TO BE LEARNED BY Democrats from recent events in both the real and political worlds is that economic growth alone is not enough. Expansion of gross domestic product is a good thing, but 4 percent annual growth does not guarantee

that Americans will see significant improvement in their own economic positions; and eroding real wages in the midst of a growing economy translates into an important political fact as well. Economically, politically, and most importantly morally, Democrats should insist on public policies that not only promote economic growth but also work against the current trends in which nearly all of that increase is concentrated in the hands of a few.

The Democratic Leadership Council has argued against focusing on distribution issues, preferring policies that promote growth in a technologically oriented economy. Those of us on the other side have agreed that pro-growth policies are necessary, but that they are insufficient for improving the quality of life for most Americans.

We now have strong confirmation both in economic statistics and in election results that a focus on growth alone is insufficient. One set of statistics is particularly stark: From 2001 to the first quarter of 2006, corporate profits as a share of national income went from 8 percent to 14 percent. During that same period, wages as a share of national income dropped from 66 percent to 63 percent.

Public policies have not created this stark increase in the maldistribution of wealth. But government ought to contain the strong tendency toward greater inequality in our economy. We have reached the point where inequality has grown far beyond what is necessary for economic

efficiency, causing social, economic, and political problems.

We should sharpen the differences between Democrats and Republicans in this regard. The Bush administration has consciously worked to exacerbate the inequality. It has opposed an increase in the minimum wage; blocked the right of working men and women to join unions and appointed anti-union members to the Labor Relations Board; changed the tax code to reward the wealthiest; cut back on those public programs which diminish inequality by making important services available to middle- and lower-income people; and done everything possible to help drug companies raise their prices, contributing to an increase in health-care costs, which has become one of the major problems for the great bulk of working Americans.

The election results have provided compelling evidence that the Democrats should respond with policies that are the direct opposite of the Republicans' strategies.

Even the Bush administration has implicitly acknowledged that Americans aren't greatly cheered by growth when they don't see it in their wallets. In July, Allan Hubbard, director of Bush's National Economic Council lamented the

fact that the economy was doing so well but the administration was getting too little credit for it.

During the election campaign, Nancy Pelosi and senior Democrats on committees with economic responsibilities held a forum with experts from business, labor, academia, who helped us document the shortfall in wages in the midst of GDP growth. While the forum did not get a lot of attention from the press, the voters, conveying the same message, surely did.

The lessons are clear both from economic statistics and electoral results—the public understands the unfairness of the current tendencies toward distribution of income, and will support a strong Democratic effort to correct this.

By raising the minimum wage, making the tax system fairer, changing the law to allow workers who want to join unions to be able to do so, controlling health-care costs in a responsible way, and expanding educational opportunity, we should bring fairness back to economic policy making.

This also, of course, has an international dimension. Trade policy that encourages our trading partners to ignore the environment and workers' rights is not only wrong, but it contributes to the

climate in which our ability to adopt reasonable worker protection and environmental standards are eroded here at home. Democrats will insist on incorporating labor and environmental standards in trade policy.

Of course the war in Iraq was the single biggest reason for our winning. But public unhappiness with an economy in which the GDP grows but very few Americans get to share in that growth was also a factor. In the next Congress, Democrats must understand this and act. **TAP**

The public understands the unfairness of the current trends in the distribution of income.

Congressman Barney Frank, a Massachusetts Democrat, is the incoming chairman of the House Financial Services Committee.

Dispatches

“U.N. peacekeepers cannot deploy to Darfur without Sudan’s consent, which they do not have.”

— PAGE 13



Unaccustomed Elation: But what can they do to make this victory endure?

CAPITOL HILL

STRATEGIC TWO-FERS

How the Democrats can do good and help their friends

BY EZRA KLEIN

JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, LIBERALS were cowering before Karl Rove’s plans to permanently marginalize the Democratic Party and construct an enduring Republican majority. With Rove’s reputation at an apex and the hapless Democrats still reeling from their unexpected defeat in the 2002 midterms, his vision appeared eerily achievable. Reporting on Rove’s efforts in *The New Yorker*, Nicholas Lemann identified six policies the GOP was prioritizing to hasten the Donkey’s death. The first set were tort reform, unflinching support for Israel, and deunionization—policies that would either flip or impoverish lawyers, unions,

and Jews, thus eliminating the three primary funding sources for the Democrats. Simultaneously, the GOP would seek to privatize Social Security, Medicare, and education, robbing Democrats of their three signature accomplishments and political *raison d’être*.

As Lemann was writing in May 2003, the Bush administration was pursuing all six strategies. Queried by Lemann on whether he sought to permanently destroy the opposition party, Rove did not deny the suggestion: “[D]o you weaken a political party, either by turning what they see as assets into liabilities, and/or by taking issues they consider to be theirs,

and raiding them? ... Absolutely!”

This year’s repudiation of Republicans and restoration of Democrats marks the end of Rove’s strategy. But there’s much in his focus on the long term that Democrats could learn from. Where Rove sought enduring political dominance by destroying the Democrats, the left can pursue its own play for sustained, majority status in a more positive fashion: By prioritizing policies that strengthen, expand, and empower their coalition.

Historically, Democrats are quite bad at this. When Bill Clinton entered office, his administration fell to debating whether the first major policy priority should be NAFTA or health care. Trade liberalization won, but the fight over NAFTA helped doom the subsequent health-care effort by exhausting and angering the AFL-CIO, which channeled resources into the NAFTA battle that would have gone to fund its National Health Care Campaign.

Policy merits (or lack thereof) of NAFTA aside, its passage certainly didn’t enlarge the Democratic base. Health care, on the other hand, could have. In a legendary political memo, William Kristol outlined precisely why Republicans had to oppose Clinton’s reforms “sight unseen” and eschew compromise proposals. “Health care,” Kristol wrote, “is not, in fact, just another Democratic initiative. ... It will revive the reputation of the ... Democrats, as the generous protector of middle-class interests”—and in so doing, enlarge their electoral coalition substantially. In 1994, Democrats passed the assault weapons ban, which was good policy but did nothing for the Democratic coalition; on the contrary, it enraged the conservative base and contributed to Newt Gingrich’s triumph in the midterms. But past needn’t be prelude for the new Democratic majority. A quick canvass of smart Democrats from many walks of life produced a dazzling array of laudable pol-

icy ideas that would work to better the country—and expand and empower the left. Herewith, a sampling.

UNIONS

Organized labor is the backbone of the American left and the Democratic Party. A key fund-raiser, a rich repository of votes, and a critical get-out-the-vote part-

regulated by the National Labor Relations Board, allows employers ample time to terrorize and intimidate their workers into rejecting the union. In at least 25 percent of cases, pro-union workers are illegally fired, but the penalties for such illegal terminations are so miniscule that companies write them off as smart business decisions.

Its policy merits (if any) aside, NAFTA outraged labor and certainly didn't enlarge the Democratic base. It's no way to build a party.

ner; unions are to the Democrats what the Christian Right is to the GOP. Yet the Donkey has let its partners in labor fall into sharp decline. The situation has grown so dire that Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, warns that "the United States is in violation of international human-rights standards for workers."

How to help? The current organizing process, which turns on a public election

Much of that would be repaired by passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), already sponsored by 216 members of the House and 45 in the Senate—and that's in the old, Republican-controlled House and Senate. The EFCA would introduce card check, allowing unionization to occur as soon as a majority the workforce signed cards calling for a union. It would radically increase the penalties on illegal union-busting tech-

niques, and provide new avenues for mediation and arbitration of organizing disputes. The end result would be that more of the 57 million Americans who say they would like to join a union would be able to do so. And since about 70 percent of union voters went Democratic in 2006, good policy, here, would mean good politics for the Democrats.

VOTING REFORM

The country's voting laws profoundly disadvantage young, old, poor, and mobile voters, all groups that swing Democratic. A few reforms, among the many good ones that should be instituted, stand out. Ensuring adequate supplies of voting machines would end the hour-long lines that amount to *de facto* disenfranchisement for voters with families or lives. Same-day voter registration would particularly enfranchise young people. Creating a voting holiday—some suggest using Veterans Day—would also help: In addition to underscoring the holiness of the democratic process, it would vastly ease the strain on those in low-wage jobs with little access to transportation or time off.

More controversial, but possibly more important, would be felon re-enfranchisement. In most states, former felons are barred from voting, even after they've served their sentences and finished parole. Because the legal system disproportionately convicts African-American and low-income individuals, it disenfranchises millions of voters whose interests line up with the left. In 2006, Rhode Island's electorate overturned the restriction, affirming that reformed offenders are to be welcomed back into society. Were the rest of the country to do the same, it would be a victory for democracy and a boon to Democrats.

CAMPAIGN-FINANCE REFORM

The exorbitant expense of contemporary elections has left campaigners dependent on corporate sponsors—who obviously expect some fealty in return, and can swiftly punish if they don't get it. As the Democratic Party is only partially—albeit substantially—corrupted by this dynamic, more corporate donations accrue to Republicans, tilting the electoral

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playing field—and government policy—significantly to the right.

Options for reform are manifold, from full public-financing schemes to variants of the clean-election laws in Arizona. Among the most interesting is New York City's program, which creates 4 to 1 matching on small-sum contributions. Such a setup magnifies the influence of small donors by making them a viable funding source for a serious campaign. A similar program, on a federal level, would allow individual contributions to emerge as a serious funding alternative to corporate money. It would also enhance the power of, among others, the online left, who have already proved energetic fund-raisers and could become a serious constituency calling for, as payback, progressive reform.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

In 2006, seven out of 10 Latinos went for the Democrats. But that's the tip of the iceberg, given the estimated 11 to 12 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States. George W. Bush and John McCain both would like to see comprehensive immigration reform that enshrines a path to citizenship. With the GOP scared of repelling an inevitably influential voting bloc, there's opportunity for a genuinely bipartisan solution that would create, in

the near term, millions of new voters predisposed to vote Democratic.

PAYGO

Pay-as-you-go is a proposed budgetary law that requires changes in either revenues or spending to be balanced in the budget; it would, some suggest, end this era of irresponsible tax cuts and budgetary demagoguery. The Republican majority has sustained itself economically by cutting taxes without reducing (in fact, accelerating) spending. PAYGO would render that impossible, and force their free-ice-cream-for-everybody strategy to meet its much deserved demise. And some built-in suspension triggered by moments of economic emergency would allow liberals the Keynesian flexibility they desire.

Those are but a few of the ideas swirling around the progressive community. If Democrats truly believe their political success benefits the majority of Americans, it's time they took ensuring their coalition's health and expanding its size as policy imperatives. All these proposals would help do that—and would increase political participation and empower oft-marginalized voices. Call it Rovian altruism. Call it good politics. **TAP**

Ezra Klein is a Prospect writing fellow.

AFRICA

WHILE THOUSANDS DIE

The U.N. force to secure Darfur from genocide hasn't budged an inch.

BY MARK LEON GOLDBERG

THIS AUGUST, THE UNITED NATIONS Security Council authorized a major force—more than 22,000 strong—to deploy to Darfur. Under the Security Council's mandate, the U.N. troops would take over Darfur's defense from the undersized and ill-equipped African Union force, which has been unable to prevent attacks on civilian enclaves. Eventually, the United Nations Mission in Sudan was supposed to oversee a political settlement and establish order.

The Security Council resolution mandated that the transition to the U.N. force begin by October, and conclude no later than December 31. Darfuris, however, will have to place their hopes on hold. As of publication, not one blue helmet has set foot in Darfur. Indeed, the transition to a U.N. force has not even begun.

The dilemma is basically this: U.N. peacekeepers cannot deploy to Darfur without Khartoum's consent, which so far, they do not have. That has made



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the countries that supply the bulk of the peacekeepers around the world—Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India—uneasy; they have made it clear they will not pony up troops for a mission that would be tantamount to an invasion. Complicating a nonconsensual deployment is the logistical reality that sending troops into the arid, landlocked region would require the use of Sudanese ports for constant re-supply.

Part of Khartoum's defiance reflects its favored status with China, which imports almost half of Sudan's oil production. So far, Beijing has not pressured Khartoum to accept a U.N. force. But the United States has reinforced the status quo as well. It has not made headway on convincing Sudan to allow peacekeepers, resorting to tough talk backed by no meaningful action. Breaking Khartoum's opposition to the U.N. force is the only reasonable solution to the crisis in Darfur. But to do this, the Bush administration will have to undergo a significant shift in policy.

SINCE THE FIGHTING BEGAN BETWEEN Darfur rebel groups and the central government in Khartoum in 2003, several hundred thousand people have been killed, with millions more displaced to squalid, overcrowded camps. The government of Sudan bears the greatest responsibility for these deaths: Soon after the Darfuri rebellion, the government launched a counterinsurgency strategy principally aimed at wiping out the ethnic groups from which the rebels came. To do that, the government bought off and armed individual ethnic groups in Darfur. With their proxy militia on the ground supported by government air power, the government systematically cleared out "rebel strongholds" (otherwise known as towns and villages), to brutal effect. By the following spring, refugees were flooding over Darfur's western border into Chad.

At first, Washington was reluctant to intervene for fear of upsetting separate peace negotiations between the central government and rebels in the South. For

years, the State Department had tried to broker a resolution to the bloody, 20-year civil war that claimed some 2 million lives. Yet, while Khartoum neared an ultimately successful peace accord with the south, it simultaneously stepped up its Darfur offensive. The Bush administration then made the fateful decision to pursue the north-south accord at the cost of pressing Khartoum to halt its attacks in Darfur.

Since taking office, top Bush administration officials, including the president himself, have from time to time issued strong condemnations of Khartoum's human-rights record. The Bush administration has also kept intact unilateral American sanctions of Sudan ordered by President Clinton in 1997 to punish Sudan for sponsoring terrorists and human-rights abuses (Sudan harbored Osama bin Laden from 1991 to 1996). Nonetheless, U.S. policy has been, essentially, to speak loudly and carry a small stick.

In April 2005, for instance, the



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Lip Service: Andrew Natsios, the U.S. special envoy to Sudan, cocks an ear to the president.

administration asked the chair of the House Appropriations Committee Jerry Lewis to strip a rider to the Iraq and Afghanistan emergency supplemental budget that called for targeted sanctions against members of the Sudanese regime and for a no-fly zone to be established over Darfur. When the so-called Darfur Peace and Accountability Act finally left the House in April 2006, it languished for months in the office of Senate Foreign Relations Chair Richard Lugar's office. Finally, in September 2006, Lugar released his own version of the bill for a vote. But by then it had been watered down even further; absent was a provision in the house version of the bill that affirmed the rights of state governments to divest from pension funds that include companies that do business with Khartoum. The provision enjoyed wide bipartisan support, leaving advocates to once again suspect White House intervention.

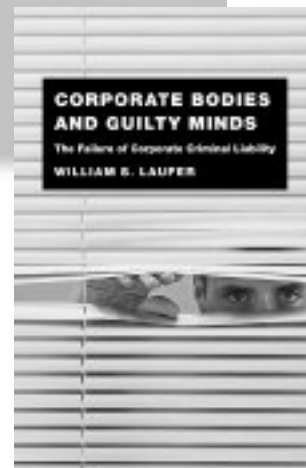
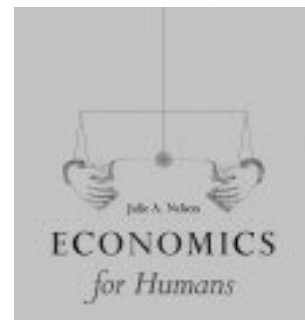
"Besides tough talk, besides the occasional public statements, not one meaningful punitive measure has been implemented," explains John Prendergast, an Africa specialist in President Clinton's National Security Council and now special assistant to the president of the International Crisis Group. "The policy still resembles what I would call 'gentle persuasion.'" Remarkably, even following then-Secretary of State Colin Powell's description of the slaughter in Darfur as

"genocide" in September 2004, this softer approach on Darfur persisted.

At times the administration has seemed almost to coddle the Khartoum regime. One year ago, the State Department issued a waiver to American sanctions to allow Sudan to hire a well-known Washington, D.C., lobbyist, Robert Cabelly, to improve its image in Congress. (The waiver was only revoked following an angry phone call to the State Department from Republican Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia.) Similarly, on his first trip to Sudan in April 2005, then Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick—standing at a press conference with a top Sudanese official by his side—gave a mortality estimate of 60,000 to 160,000 dead, downplaying even the most conservative claims.

Meanwhile, the administration has behaved inconsistently regarding potential U.N. action on Darfur. The United States has been the lead author of every major Security Council resolution on Sudan, including the August resolution authorizing a peacekeeping force. Yet strongly worded resolutions require follow up to ensure their implementation. And here, American commitment is lacking. When the newly appointed presidential envoy to Sudan, Andrew Natsios, returned from his first trip to Sudan in late October 2006, he seemed to backpedal from the robust August peacekeeping resolution his adminis-

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tration authored. In an interview posted on the U.S. Holocaust Museum's Web site, Natsios let slip that the administration was considering an "alternate way" to confront the violence in Darfur. The White House later denied any policy shift, but a mixed message had already been telegraphed to Khartoum, which consequently is refusing to budge from its opposition to peacekeepers.

The death toll, however, is climbing. Humanitarian organizations, concerned for the safety of their employees, have been quietly pulling out of Darfur. In September, the United Nation's chief humanitarian official envoy warned that Darfur was slipping into a "freefall." The same envoy also warned two years earlier that if humanitarian organizations pull out of Darfur completely, as many as 100,000 people could die in Darfur each month. "Without a dramatic improvement in security," says Sudan expert Eric Reeves, "I believe the current death toll of approximately half a million could double by [next year]."

An accelerating death march in

Darfur has been accompanied by growing calls, in some quarters, for immediate military intervention by the United States. Clearly that's not going to happen, but there are steps the U.S. can take, a number of which were outlined in October by the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based nongovernmental organization, that might force Khartoum to accept a U.N. force.

At the United Nations, the United States can push for targeted individual sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes on key members of the regime in Khartoum. (Following the Bush's administration's go-easy approach, current U.N. sanctions apply to just two mid-level officials in the entire Sudanese government.) The United States can also lead a Security Council action to impose economic sanctions against the regime's state-run commercial enterprises, including the petroleum sector.

The report also encourages the United States to begin immediate planning for a no-fly zone over Darfur, which could be enforced from a French garrison

in Chad and from an American base in Djibouti. (A ban on offensive military overflights already has the support of the Security Council, but so far no member of the council has offered to enforce it.) Taking the military option one step further, former Clinton National Security officials Anthony Lake and Susan Rice teamed with New Jersey Congressman Donald Payne in an October *Washington Post* op-ed to call on the administration to issue an ultimatum: Either Khartoum consents to a U.N. force or they will suffer airstrikes.

With a political stalemate over U.N. troops threatening the lives of millions in Darfur, the Bush administration still prefers lip service to meaningful steps that would alter Khartoum's cost-benefit calculations. Until the requisite pressure is applied, this genocide will continue. The question is whether the pressure will come sooner, later, or never. **TAP**

Mark Leon Goldberg is a Prospect senior correspondent and a Writer-in-Residence with the United Nations Foundation.

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Gettysburg, Again

Four decades after the South started going Republican, its influence is receding as the North becomes more Democratic. (Which is why the Democrats aren't moving right.)

BY THOMAS F. SCHALLER

THE REVOLUTION IS OVER.

After 12 years of GOP control of both chambers of Congress and a majority of American governors' offices, the Republican era has finally imploded. And while it was accelerated by self-inflicted wounds from bribery and a child-predation scandal, the Republican demise was chiefly caused by a congenital self-denial about the growing disconnect between the party's pursuit of power and the inability to deliver on its promises. Simply put, the GOP could no longer sustain a majority that elevated public relations over policy performance, mantra over management.

Despite their defeat, Republicans will attempt to fashion a sort of "pre-visionist" history of why their reign ended. The same folks who are all too happy to brag about mandates that exceed the actual winning margins—or in Bush's case six years ago, a *negative* margin—have both the media means and ideological motive to re-cast their de-

feat as if it were an indirect validation of their ideas and policies. They scoff that Democrats didn't win so much as the Republicans lost. With the Iraq War dragging down the approval ratings of President Bush and Congress, there is certain, undeniable truth to this claim.

But a companion narrative is also developing, one suggesting that Democrats won by running as conservatives or at least centrists. Fingers point to such pro-life winners as Pennsylvania's Bob Casey in the Senate or North Carolina's Heath Shuler in the House, as if these victories are representative. The media, in fact, were echoing this idea *before* all the votes were counted. "In their push to win back control of the House, Democrats have turned to conservative and moderate candidates who fit the profiles of their districts more closely than the profile of the national party," began one late-October *New York Times* profile of Shuler and a few other cherry-picked House candidates who ran in red states. "The Democrats have come a long way since they prevented Bob Casey from speaking at their 1992 convention," declared Joe Scarborough, the afternoon of the election. "And they're gonna win because of it."

Man-bites-dog reportage may make for interesting commentary, but it ultimately misrepresents the prevailing patterns and results of the 2006 midterms. As even the most cursory look at the electoral map shows—as does a fuller portrait of new Democratic faces soon to arrive on Capitol

MCDAVID HENDERSON



Hill—the notion of a conservative-centrist Democratic renaissance is fictitious. To invert the title of this year's blockbuster environmental documentary, it is a convenient untruth.

Indeed, the most notable fact about the Democrats' gains this year is that they chiefly occurred not in the South, but in the North and West. That hardly portends a rightward shift within the victorious Democratic Party.

AMONG THE PARTY'S TOP 50 OR SO HOUSE CON-tenders this cycle, the Democrats fielded three candidates named Murphy. Two won and a third lost, but this trio of Irish Catholic lawyers are indicative of who—and where—the Democrats found their new majority.

Let's start with Pennsylvania's Lois Murphy, the only of the three to lose this year. Her defeat was doubly painful, since Lois also lost narrowly in 2004 to Republican Jim Gerlach. A Harvard-trained lawyer, Murphy was trying to dislodge Gerlach—whom the *National Journal* ranked the 35th most liberal Republican elected to the 108th Congress—from the state's Sixth District, one that both Al Gore and John Kerry had carried. Murphy, who is a 42-year-old wife and mother of two, criticized Gerlach for not protecting the environment, opposing the minimum wage, siding with the oil companies, and voting for the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Fellow suburban Philadelphian Patrick Murphy, a 32-year-old lawyer and Iraq War veteran, defeated Republican Mike Fitzpatrick in the nearby Eighth District, which Gore and Kerry also won. Murphy positioned himself to the right of Fitzpatrick on border issues. But his Web site proudly highlighted his pro-choice and pro-stem cell research positions and his support for making college tuition tax deductible. In his ads the former 82nd Airborne paratrooper denounced Fitzpatrick as a "cheerleader" for Bush's "open-ended" Iraq policy.

Finally, there is Chris Murphy, a clean-cut state legislator who was still in elementary school when Nancy Johnson, the 12-term Republican stalwart whom he vanquished this November, was first elected to Congress from western Connecticut's Fifth District. One of the most liberal Republicans in the House, Johnson opposed the bans on partial-birth abortion and same-sex marriage. In classic populist fashion, Murphy criticized Johnson for taking pharmaceutical industry money and voting for the costly Medicare prescription drug bill, and also for "toeing the line" with Bush on Iraq while voting against veterans benefits and military pay raises.

All three Murphys ran clearly and unambiguously to the left of these moderate Republican in-

cumbents who represent affluent, suburban districts. This pattern—progressive Democrats defeating moderate Republicans—is hardly limited to Murphys.

Data collected by Media Matters for America on the 2006 Democratic nominees in the most competitive House contests show that the vast majority opposed privatizing Social Security, supported increasing the minimum wage, and backed embryonic stem-cell research. Only a handful described themselves as "pro-life." And of course, though they were of many minds when it came to the proper solution for Iraq, they were uniformly critical of the Iraq War.

A pack of Zell Millers this was not.

In a prescient pre-election analysis, *The Washington Post's* Shailagh Murray captured the frustrations of one at-risk Republican moderate who found himself suddenly under fire. "I am the same candidate I was two years ago, four years ago, six years ago," embattled New Hampshire Republican Charlie Bass complained to a group of state business leaders at a local tech plant. "I know my constituents, and they know me. [But it's] a terrible year to be running for re-election."

Terrible, indeed: Paul Hodes seared Bass, 53 percent to 45 percent, to become part of the Democratic freshman class of the 110th Congress. Joining Hodes will be Carol Shea-Porter, a militantly anti-war candidate, who shocked everyone by beating Republican Jeb Bradley to snag New Hampshire's other House seat.

WHAT IS THE LARGER MEANING OF THE 2006 Democratic wave? Pulling back the lens a bit, what one sees is the eventuation of a regional realignment that began a half-century ago and is

The GOP has just one remaining congressman in all of New England. Rudy Giuliani couldn't save New Hampshire's Charlie Bass.



now nearing its conclusion. That realignment commenced with the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which led to the inevitable conversion of Dixiecrats into Republicans—first at the presidential level in the 1960s and 1970s, then at the congressional level in the 1980s and 1990s, with ongoing Republicanization further down the ballot along the way.

The Republicans' "southern strategy"—initiated by Barry Goldwater, accelerated by Richard Nixon, expanded by Ronald Reagan, and per-



The Republican southern strategy—initiated by Goldwater, accelerated by Nixon, expanded by Reagan, perfected by Bush—is now complete at every level of government.

fectured by George W. Bush—is now a fait accompli, and at every level of government. Prior to this year's election, the Republicans held a greater share of Senate, House, and governors' seats in the former Confederate states than the Democrats did in the dozen northeastern states from Maine to Maryland. In fact, the percentage of northeastern House and Senate seats that Democrats controlled following the 2004 elections, when John Kerry won all 12 of those states, was basically the same as it was after the 1968 elections in which Nixon carried Delaware, New Jersey, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Why haven't the Democrats been able to maximize congressional and gubernatorial control over the blue presidential regions of the country? The persistent bulwark to Democratic consolidation of the Northeast, and especially the Midwest, has been the stubborn retention of seats by Ford- and Rockefeller-style Republicans.

Pairing fiscal prudence—a term once associated with the Bush family—with social moderation,

these self-described "Main Street Partnership" Republicans have frustrated Democratic hopefuls across the Rust Belt for decades. The list includes governors like Connecticut's Jodi Rell and the outgoing George Pataki of New York; senators such as Maine's female duo of Susan Collins and Olympia Snow; and a parade of House members.

The 2006 elections were a corrective, an overdue if not inevitable Rust Belt realignment brought upon by the rightward shift of American policy and politics led by the southernization of the Republican Party. Republican losses were fueled by the return of Catholic "Reagan Democrats," a labor resurgence, and the pivotal power of inner suburban voters. The Democratic pickups across the Northeast and Midwest were sufficient to give the Democrats majorities in the House, the Senate, and among governors for the first time since the 1994 revolution.

Democrats netted four new governors—Maryland's Martin O'Malley, Massachusetts' Deval Patrick, New York's Eliot Spitzer, and Ohio's Ted Strickland—while holding all their existing seats. Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island produced half of the six new senators Nevada's Harry Reid needed to become the new majority leader. In the House, Republicans suffered 20 losses in the Northeast-Midwest corridor, five more than Speaker-elect Nancy Pelosi needed to forge a new governing majority. With those twin double Republican losses in Connecticut and New Hampshire, Connecticut's Chris Shays becomes the only Republican congressman in all of New England.

Without losing their grip on either the Maryland or New Jersey Senate seats, the Democrats also added four new Rust Belt senators: Missouri's Claire McCaskill, Ohio's Sherrod Brown, Pennsylvania's Bob Casey, and Rhode Island's Sheldon Whitehouse. Casey's victory over Rick Santorum is least surprising because Santorum was the most glaring ideological misfit, measured against his own state's politics, in the entire Senate. More telling were the defeats of Rhode Island's Lincoln Chafee and Ohio's Mike DeWine.

Chafee, a pro-choice moderate, was the lone Republican senator to vote against the October 2002 Iraq resolution. Though he signaled his disgust with Bush by casting a 2004 write-in vote for president for Bush's father, the state's liberal voters could abet Chafee's soft partisanship no longer. After his defeat, he indicated that he might switch parties.

The moderate DeWine was defeated by Brown, who is the unofficial poster boy for economic populists. Proud driver, when home in Ohio, of a beat-up Thunderbird with a "NAFTA + CAFTA = SHAFTA"

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO

bumper sticker on the back, Brown instantly becomes Congress' leading voice against free trade and the closest thing in the Senate to an heir to Paul Wellstone.

In the House, the casualties included some surprises, like Arizona's ragingly right-wing J.D. Hayworth, who will no longer represent the posh Glendale golf resorts in the ever-sprawling Phoenix suburbs. But Hayworth is an outlier. Based on the *National Journal's* ideological rankings of members of the House of Representatives, 10 of the 28 most liberal Republicans were taken down. Along with Connecticut's Johnson (No. 3) and New Hampshire's Bass (No. 12), a total of five of the dozen most liberal were toppled, including Iowa's Jim Leach (No. 1) and Connecticut's Rob Simmons (No. 7). The retiring Sherwood Boehlert of New York (No. 6) saw his seat taken by a Democrat, too.

The meaning of these defeats is that the Republican caucuses will now be further dominated by Southern-based cultural conservatives, while the ascendant Democratic majorities will be infused with new liberal blood. This will push the Democratic caucus to the left as it expands—particularly on economics and foreign policy—and the Republican caucus to the right as it shrinks. Those hoping for an end to partisan polarization on Capitol Hill, or between Congress and the White House, may be sorely disappointed.

The 2006 elections produced a stunning reconfiguration of regional partisanship. Nancy Pelosi will not only become the first female House Speaker, but the first since the 83rd Congress (1953-1954, when pre-Goldwater Republicans were in the majority) whose party holds a minority of southern House seats. Likewise, Nevada Senator Harry Reid's 50-plus-Bernie Sanders majority includes a very small minority (five of 22) of southern senators. Ninety percent of Reid's members are not from the South.

For the first time in half a century, the party of the South is the out-of-power party nationally.

A variety of meteorological metaphors have been used to describe 2006—tidal wave, hurricane, and earthquake. "Blizzard" is the most appropriate term for the 2006 midterms, however, for an old-fashioned n'oreaster blew through the Rust Belt.

SOMEWHERE IN THE REPUBLICAN HEAVENS, Nelson Rockefeller must have finally let out a long overdue cackle on November 7, 2006.

Five decades ago, the patrician New York governor stood firmly as the bulwark against the Republican reincarnation to come. The embodiment of his party's northeastern establishmentarian

wing, Rockefeller and his cohorts lorded over their party until the conservatives, tired of being ignored by the New Deal Democrats and dismissed by the GOP's complacent centrists, found their voice in a western maverick (with a southern following) named Barry Goldwater.

In 1960, at the "Compact of Fifth Avenue" meeting held in Rockefeller's Manhattan apartment, Rocky barricaded his party against the coming conservative tide by persuading presidential nominee Richard Nixon to agree to a 14-point plan that included a strong endorsement of civil rights. Nixon received 32 percent of the African American vote that year which, by today's standards, is a startling achievement for any Republican.

But Rockefeller's efforts were merely stopgap measures. After losing narrowly in 1960 to John Kennedy—whose campaign circulated pictures in some white neighborhoods showing Nixon smiling with black children—Nixon came back for a second crack at the White House eight years later. He had learned the lessons of his first, failed bid and those of Goldwater's intervening 1964 campaign. Abandoning any pretense of accommodation, Nixon's embraced the southern strategy and won the presidency.

By increments, that strategy has since produced two generations of Republican victories, with Nixon carrying only the White House, Reagan adding the Senate to his 1980 presidency, Newt Gingrich flipping both chambers of Congress in 1994, and George W. Bush adding the White House to that in 2000.

The first six years of the new century were supposed to be the final stage of Republican realignment. All the puzzle pieces were there—control of all three branches; strategic, tactical, and rhetorical mastery; and, in September 11, a powerful realigning issue. But as presidents so often do, Bush overreached.

His cowboy foreign policy, coupled with "big-government conservative" spending and governmental intrusions from the start of life (stem cells) to the end (Terry Schiavo), may have appealed to his southern base. The rest of the country, however, wasn't buying it. This November, since they could only vent their anger about the war in Iraq and the direction of the country on the nearest Republican, the non-Southerners voted out their own. The great irony of the purge that progressives carried out in 2006 is that those largely Southern conservatives who were leading the Republican Party's downfall will survive to legislate another day, while many reluctant Rust Belt Republicans became unwitting victims. You can't say Rockefeller didn't warn them. **TAP**

Pelosi will be the first speaker since 1954 whose party holds a minority of southern seats.

Thomas F. Schaller is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and author of Whistling Past Dixie.

It Wasn't Just Iraq

While the economy vexed the Republicans, some old-fashioned populism helped the Democrats. How can the Democrats build on their success for 2008 and beyond?

BY JACOB S. HACKER AND RUY TEIXEIRA

JUST ABOUT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THE importance of Iraq to the Democrats' success in the 2006 midterm elections. Far fewer, we suspect, understand that the Democrats owe a good chunk of their 2006 success to an issue that has historically been one of their strongest: the economy.

Throughout the campaign, polls regularly indicated that the economy was the second most important concern of voters (behind Iraq); polls taken in the last weekend by Pew, ABC News/*Washington Post* and *Newsweek* confirmed this. On Election Day, 39 percent of voters deemed the economy "extremely important" to their House vote, and those voters backed the Democrats by a wide 59 percent to 39 percent margin. Similarly, a post-election poll by Democracy Corps and the Campaign for America's Future found that jobs and the economy was cited by 26 percent of voters as their most or second-most important issue (again, only lagging behind Iraq), and those voters supported Democrats by a 63 percent to 36 percent margin.

Nor was this voting pattern confined to House races. In key Senate contests across the country, especially where candidates highlighted the country's continuing economic problems, Democrats also benefited greatly from voters who said the economy was central to their vote. In Ohio, where Democrat Sherrod Brown struck an explicitly populist note, 42 percent of voters said the economy was extremely important to their vote and these voters supported Brown over Republican incumbent Mike DeWine by a stunning 71 percent to 29 percent margin. In Pennsylvania, where Democratic candidate Bob Casey ran hard against big oil, big pharma, the insurance companies, and Bush's tax cuts for the rich, 38 percent said the economy was extremely important to their vote, and that group supported Casey over Republican incumbent Rick Santorum by 66 percent to 34 percent. And in Missouri, where Democratic candidate Claire McCaskill echoed Casey's populist themes, with a special emphasis on health care, 45 percent of voters said the economy was extremely important, and these voters backed McCaskill over incumbent Jim Talent by 60 percent to 37 percent.

Clearly, the economy mattered greatly in the

2006 election. In fact, it was one of the great unifying themes of this year's campaigns, as essentially all Democrats, including the victorious House candidates who have been labeled "conservative" because of their positions on social issues, promised to raise the minimum wage, oppose Social Security privatization, stand up to corporate interests, and get a better, fairer deal for the middle class. The importance of the economy to Democratic campaigns may also be seen by how they spent their ad dollars. A study by the Campaign for America's Future tracked television advertising expenditures in 11 diverse Senate, House, and governors' races. They classified ads by the issues they covered and found, intriguingly, that jobs and the economy (defined narrowly, so it excluded seniors' issues like Medicare and Social Security) actually had the highest ad expenditures—higher even than corruption or Iraq.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE economy to the Democrats' 2006 victory is important for several reasons, one of which is to vindicate the progressive critique of the Bush economy as delivering little in wage and income growth for the ordinary family, even as it ratcheted up insecurity around health care, retirement, and the availability of middle-class jobs. That's why voters punished the GOP on the economy, even though the Bush administration did deliver reasonably good economic growth and relatively low unemployment. Indeed, on Election Day, 81 percent of voters told exit pollsters they had just enough financially to get by or were falling behind and 68 percent thought life for the next generation of Americans would not be better than today. All these voters supported the Democrats by wide margins. Democrats should note this and continue to focus on America's very real economic problems and how to solve them.

But another reason to be very clear on the role of the economy is that this issue, as important as it was this year, may have to increase in importance in future elections if Democrats hope to maintain and extend their gains. The Iraq conflict, after all, will not go on forever and corruption is unlikely to be as big an issue going forward for the simple reason that the GOP has now lost much of the power that facilitated its corruption. And, critically, the Democrats have now acquired a considerable contingent of new voters who are very interested in seeing progress made on these economic problems, but are less interested in the Democrats' social liberalism (in contrast to much of the Democrats' professional and upscale political support).

This can be seen clearly by looking at which voters shifted to the Democrats in 2006. The national



Missouri's Claire McCaskill decisively won those voters who said the economy was extremely important.



exit poll shows that non-college-educated (working-class) voters shifted from supporting GOP candidates for the House by 51 percent to 48 percent in 2004 to supporting Democratic candidates this year by 53 percent to 45 percent. The exit poll also shows that white voters went from giving GOP House candidates a very strong 57 percent to 42 percent advantage in 2004 to a much narrower 51 percent to 47 percent advantage this year. While it is impossible to generate a precise estimate at this point (the internals of the exit poll have not yet been publicly released so we don't know directly, for example, how white non-college voters cast their ballots), a rough estimate is that about half of the shift toward House Democrats this year came from white working-class voters, about 35 percent from white college-educated voters and about 15 percent from minority voters (overwhelmingly from Hispanics).

The challenge for Democrats, then, is to keep—and expand—their support among these new voters in 2008 and beyond, while the salience of the Iraq and corruption issues fades. There are certainly reasonable arguments to be made that Democrats' efforts to do so will be facilitated by defusing Republican values issues and continuing to close the gap on national-security issues. But the Great Attractor, it seems to us, must lie in the Democrats' economic program, a potential source of huge comparative advantage over the GOP. White working-class and Hispanic voters, it seems fair to say, are unlikely to cast their lot enthusiastically with the Democratic Party because it is the socially liberal or the peace-oriented party. They are much more likely to do so because they feel the Democrats provide a way forward for them in the turbulent new economy.

Based on the 2006 campaign, the Democrats might feel they already have the right economic program. After all, the populist notes struck by many candidates road-tested well in various campaigns, and the House Democrats' "Six for '06" program contains a number of economic provisions that are well-received in most polls (raise the minimum wage, provide a tax deduction for college tuition, cut student loan interest rates, have the government negotiate for lower prescription drug prices, end tax breaks for oil companies and corporations that outsource U.S. jobs, no privatization of Social Security, and so on). Perhaps all that is necessary is to move steadily down this path or, at most, turn up the volume on one or another part of this agenda. The latter is a debate that is already breaking out between those (like the New Democrat-oriented Third Way group) that call for more investment in economic opportunity, especially through a wide range of tax credits, and those (like the Campaign for America's Future and Senator-

elect Sherrod Brown) who call for an emphasis on economic security and a full-throated populism, especially on the trade issue.

We believe this debate misses the point. The basic problem is that the current Democratic approach on the economy fundamentally misreads what voters want on the economy and fails to outline a long-term vision that will attract and retain middle-class voters. Until that problem is solved, tweaking the current agenda in the direction advocated by either camp is likely to do little good.

UNDERSTANDING WHY THIS IS SO REQUIRES A brief trip into the Democrats' past. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as the political scientist Mark Smith has shown, Democrats were seen, by wide margins, as the party of prosperity and growth. In the 1980s, however, the tables turned. The Republicans—with their emphasis on individual striving and limited government—were seen by a majority of Americans as the party best able to manage the economy. In the 1990s, the Democrats came back and largely eliminated the Republican margin. Yet, with the notable exception of their impressive showing in recent polls, they have yet to prove capable of forging a strong and lasting advantage on the economy—especially with middle- and working-class white voters, who in 2004 said they trusted Bush over Kerry on the economy by wide margins.

Democrats do have strong economic commitments, of course. But strong commitments do not automatically add up to a strong agenda. What's been missing within the Democratic Party is the kind of larger vision that formed on the other side of the aisle during the GOP's long years in the wilderness—a vision that laid out a few key aims, mobi-

About half the shift to the Democrats this year came from white working-class voters, and nearly 15 percent from Hispanics.



lized key constituencies around them, and developed messages and ideas that could both capitalize on voters' existing leanings and change those leanings. Amid all the hand-wringing about "framing," the basic problem consistently gets missed: Democrats need to articulate an underlying economic philosophy that motivates and anchors what they say and do in office. You can't build a frame without a foundation.

And not any old foundation will do: A message is better than no message, but some messages are better than others. When the discussion turns to economic policy, Democrats usually veer toward two polar strategies, as we're already seeing in the aftermath of this election: the investment approach and the populist approach. Each has worked well for the Democrats at key moments in the past. Yet neither is wholly suited to the political and economic challenges of today, because neither captures Americans' complex response to the new insecurities they face.

The obvious historical referent for the investment approach is the Clinton years, when strong growth substantially increased Democrats' standing on the economy. But the Clinton experience is actually quite cautionary. Yes, Clinton did gain reelection and bolster the party's image. Still, he was not able to re-establish Democrats' decisive economic advantage, and he presided over a strengthening of GOP control not just of the federal government, but also of the economic agenda.

What's more, economic security has become a more pressing problem—and public concern—since the Clinton years. Recent polling shows extremely high levels of anxiety about declining job security, dwindling workplace health and retirement benefits, and the growing strains on family finances. In response, many centrist Democrats have actually edged away from the investment line they once embraced. The Brookings Institution's Hamilton Project, headed by Clinton-era economic gurus such as Robert Rubin, has made economic security a centerpiece of its agenda. Meanwhile, former Clinton aide William Galston recently observed, "The economy and Americans' perception of it have changed ... in ways that require corresponding changes in our economic agenda and in the ways we talk about it ... Selective benefits for the middle class are at best a small piece of the answer. We must be prepared to take on the larger structural challenges."

This is where the populist prescription rears its head. The weakness of the investment line, according to populist thinkers, is precisely that it fails to appeal directly to voters' deep concerns about economic security, or to draw sharp lines between the

parties. What is needed instead, the argument continues, is a powerful morality tale—of the privileged stacking the deck against ordinary hard-working people.

And yet the populist prescription has its own weaknesses. Perhaps the most serious is that it fails to take seriously the extent to which many of the "people" aspire to be among the "privileged" and believe they will be. In a March 2006 poll, for example, 80 percent of Americans described themselves as middle class or poorer. Yet an amazing 44 percent believed it was very or somewhat likely that they would become wealthy. These findings are consistent with polls over many decades that show Americans to be great believers in class mobility (despite the reality that such mobility is probably no higher in the United States than in the supposedly class-bound nations of Western Europe).

In aspiring to rise higher on the economic ladder, moreover, middle-class Americans generally adopt a bifurcated view of their economic situation that is not easily reflected in populist rhetoric. On the one hand, they tend to believe that things have changed for the worse—that the economy is doing poorly, that the security that families once enjoyed is disappearing, that leaders just don't get it. On the other hand, these very same Americans believe that *they* are holding up their end of the economic bargain, that *they* are working hard and doing right by their families, that *their* story is one of optimism and hope, not pessimism and despair. Even today, with most voters embracing a negative economic story overall, many still believe a positive economic story applies to themselves. Populism appeals to the negative, pessimistic side of voters' outlook, but it frequently falls short in appealing to the positive, optimistic side.

IN MANY RESPECTS, THESE TWIN PERCEPTIONS are rooted in the same basic trend: the increasing transfer of economic risk and responsibility on to American families. This trend has certainly left some Americans better off, although gains for the median family have been decidedly unimpressive. Yet they have also meant that middle-class Americans face much greater economic insecurity than they did a generation ago. This insecurity makes Americans worried that old economic guarantees are evaporating. But turned around, it also encourages them to believe that they are ultimately responsible for their own fate, and that if they work hard enough they can get ahead. These are not contradictory beliefs; they are two sides of the same coin.

President Bush, with his recent proposals for an "ownership society," responded to one side of this two-sided coin. What the ownership society ulti-



Bush gambled that individualistic Americans would ignore the risks of the ownership society. He lost.

RON SACHS/UPI/LANDOV

mately represents—whether in the form of private accounts in Social Security or health savings accounts or new tax breaks for savings and investment—is a call for individual management of economic risks. In this sense, it is an acceleration of recent sweeping trends in risk management, rather than an attempt to reverse them. The ownership society speaks to the side of many Americans that says “I am responsible for my own success, and I will succeed.”

The Achilles’ heel of the ownership society, as the dismal fate of the president’s proposal for privatization of Social Security suggests, is that it does not speak to the other side of Americans’ views of the economy: the belief that the shift of economic risk has already progressed too far, the desire for some basic foundations of economic security to deal with the new risks and strains of the 21st century.

Indeed, pollsters regularly report 10- to 15-point advantages for economic-security messages over various versions of Bush’s low-tax ownership society. Polls also suggest a consistent preference for a role for government that promotes security in the context of expanded opportunity, as opposed to a government role that keeps taxes low to promote self-reliance. (When Americans were asked in 2005, for example, whether they were “more concerned with the opportunity to make money in the future, or the stability of knowing that your present sources of income are protected,” 62 percent favored stability and just 29 percent favored opportunity.) Bush gambled that Americans imbued with the ethos of individualism would fail to recognize the huge risks the ownership society represented. He made the wrong bet, and his misstep has helped provide Democrats with an opening to reverse the tide he hoped to further.

TO SEIZE THAT OPENING, DEMOCRATS NEED TO refashion the theme of security for the 21st century, putting forth a set of simple ideas and arguments for providing Americans with the secure financial foundation they need to reach for the American dream.

The starting point for this vision is a simple but forgotten truth: Economic security is a cornerstone of economic opportunity. When Democrats talk about social insurance they tend to focus on how programs like Social Security and Medicare help prevent financial disaster. But there is another, more positive way to talk about insurance: as a way for families *to get ahead*. Just as businesses and entrepreneurs are encouraged by basic protections against financial risk to invest in economic growth, so adequate security encourages families to invest in their own future—something many now find

quite difficult. It’s not easy to invest in the future, after all, when a sudden drop in income or rise in expenses could completely blow away your family budget. That sense of insecurity will make a person less likely to invest in specialized training, cultivate new career paths, aggressively change jobs—the very things that are likely to allow that person to get ahead.

There is a huge void in American politics just waiting to be filled by public leaders who can speak convincingly about the need to provide economic security to expand opportunity. Efforts to increase health coverage and contain health-care costs (including the cost of prescription drugs), to improve the quality and availability of child care, to defend and extend guaranteed retirement benefits (including Social Security), to provide middle-class families with strong incentives to save and build wealth, and to make college and specialized training available to all are the subjects of countless and competing policy prescriptions. But the important thing is that these policies should be put in the context of helping Americans get ahead. These are measures to allow the typical American family to raise its head from the day-to-day struggle of an insecure world and concentrate on its most heartfelt wish: to achieve the American Dream.

WITH THIS APPROACH, THE DEMOCRATS’ mantra can be simple and repeated endlessly: *providing security to expand opportunity*. The Republicans, in contrast, provide nothing, leaving hardworking American families without the secure base they need to get ahead. That’s the wrong message in this day and age and Democrats can make Republicans own it, if they play their cards right.

Over the next two years, Democrats should use their newfound power over the agenda to set goals and formulate ideas that force Republicans to take a stand on the domestic issue of our day: the economic insecurity of the American middle class. No 50-point programs. No triangulating targeted measures. Just one powerful vision, backed up by bold ideas on health care, retirement and job security, and family finances.

So repeat after us: “providing security to expand opportunity.” Try it, you’ll like it—and more important, so will the typical American voter. Indeed, that voter just might start seeing the Democrats again as the clear and easy choice to make on the economy, election after election, just as they did in the Democrats’ heyday. And with that home-court advantage back, the Democrats’ long-term electoral prospects are likely to remain bright even when noneconomic concerns do not loom as large as they did in 2006. **TAP**

Democrats should emphasize the theme of providing security to expand opportunity.

Jacob S. Hacker, professor of political science at Yale University, is author of *The Great Risk Shift: The Assault on American Jobs, Families, Health Care and Retirement*. **Ruy Teixeira** is a fellow at The Century Foundation and co-author of *The Emerging Democratic Majority*.

The Populist Persuasion

The incoming Senate Democrats may differ on cultural issues, but they all like unions and alternative energy, and can't stand drug companies and free trade.

BY HAROLD MEYERSON

NEARLY FOUR DECADES AFTER IT HAPPENED, the assassination of Robert Kennedy still presents us with the greatest might-have-been of the past half-century of American politics. In the months before his murder, campaigning across the country in 1968's tumultuous presidential primaries, Kennedy did something that no Democrat after him has been able to do: He won primary majorities among both African-Americans and working-class whites, even though the white backlash against black militants and against the urban riots of that time was reaching fever pitch. With Kennedy's murder, however, the prospects for a Democratic Party able to command the allegiance of both white and black working-class voters abruptly collapsed. A number of whites who had voted for Kennedy in the spring's primaries voted for George Wallace in the fall's general election, and for Richard Nixon four years later, and for Ronald Reagan after that. Bill Clinton was able to win back a share of those working-class whites, but they generally constitute the Democrats' greatest challenge in each election cycle.

I was reminded of those voters who'd moved from Kennedy to Wallace while speaking, a couple of days after the midterm election, with Sherrod Brown, the populist Democratic congressman who unseated Ohio Republican Senator Mike DeWine by a 56 percent to 44 percent margin. Brown was calling my attention to Butler County, a mix of affluent Cincinnati exurbanites and, farther out, working-class whites. John Kerry had gotten clobbered in Butler two years ago, winning just 34 percent of the vote. Brown lost it this year as well, but pulled down a more respectable 43 percent, running up his best totals in the district's nonaffluent precincts.

Then Brown added a little historic context. In 1968, he said, "Butler was the best county for George Wallace north of the Mason-Dixon line. There were a lot of Kentucky transplants then, and it's still got a very conservative working class."

Whatever else Brown may be, he's nobody's conservative. He opposed the Iraq War from the outset and voted against subsequent supplemental appropriation bills; he voted against the Patriot

Act and a ban on late-term abortions; he was a strong supporter of gay rights.

He didn't run from these positions in November's election, but neither did he run on them—except, of course, his opposition to the war. Chiefly, Brown ran as an economic populist. He campaigned for the state ballot measure raising the minimum wage, spoke up for changing federal labor law so workers could join unions without fear of being fired, and arranged bus trips to Canada for seniors to purchase more affordable drugs. He flayed DeWine and the Republicans for crafting Medicare's Part D to the benefit of drug companies, and the nation's energy policy to the benefit of oil companies. He argued for ambitious alternative energy programs, as a way both to arrest global warming and generate new jobs for Ohio's sagging economy. Above all, he ran as Congress' foremost critic of free trade, the Democrat who'd opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and led the fight against the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). His campaign aired at least seven ads on Ohio television that highlighted his opposition to the trade deals that DeWine had supported, against a visual backdrop of the shuttered factories that dot the Ohio landscape.

"We did, 'He stands on our side' kind of issues," Brown said. In this, he was more the rule than the exception among victorious Democratic House and Senate candidates this November. Much of the conventional wisdom about the Democratic Class of 2006 has insisted that the incoming Democrats represent a rightward shift for the Democrats—a questionable assessment based solely on the new senators' positions on cultural issues. "The incoming class of senators," said one post-election *Washington Post* analysis, "includes two economic populists in ... Brown and Bernard Sanders [Independent of Vermont], a classic centrist with a slender mandate in Claire McCaskill [Democrat of Missouri] and a cantankerous conservative in Jim Webb [Democrat of Virginia]."

The problem with this assessment is that McCaskill, and Webb even more, are economic populists, too, as are the vast majority of incoming Democrats. In his victory statement, Webb stressed the two issues he had hammered throughout his campaign: ending the war and restoring economic equity. "We are going to work very hard on issues of economic fairness in a country that has become too divided by class," Webb vowed. On his campaign Web site, contrasting his trade position with that of incumbent Republican and die-hard free-trader George Allen, he provided a scathing appraisal of the nation's policies toward globalization: "This country is splitting into three pieces," Webb



"Congress is done with ceding all trade authority to the president."
— Sherrod Brown

wrote. "As a result of the internationalization of the economy, the people at the top have never had it so good. The middle class is continuing to get squeezed by stagnant wages and rising costs of living. And we are in danger of creating a permanent underclass. We must reexamine our tax and trade policies and reinstitute notions of fairness." Perhaps more unusual for a Southern Democrat, Webb also affirmed the need for unions. "Organized labor is very important," he said, "because everyone needs an agent." For her part, McCaskill backed the minimum wage hike that was on the ballot in her state and campaigned against free-trade laws that outsourced Missouri jobs—a position that differed sharply with the free-trade policies of her opponent, incumbent Republican Jim Talent.

Indeed, every single newly elected Democratic senator is a critic of free-trade orthodoxy, and ran advocating policies that would reverse the nation's gallop toward plutocracy. Montana's Jon Tester may well be no fan of gun control, but he campaigned against insurance and drug companies and for more affordable health care, against the sale of public lands to private investors, and against the free-trade positions of incumbent Republican Conrad Burns. Tester's campaign ran ads denouncing free-trade agreements that "put our jobs and the viability of family farms and ranches across Montana in jeopardy, by handing off trade advantage to foreign interests."

Pennsylvania's new Democratic senator, Bob Casey, it's been widely noted, is a staunch anti-choice Catholic, a defender of gun owners' rights, and comfortable with some of the less civil libertarian provisions in the Patriot Act. But the thrust of his campaign was for old-style New Deal economics: ending tax cuts for the rich and creating them for the middle-class; expanding health coverage; creating a quasi-public works program in alternative energy and retrofitting projects; championing unions. Casey ran four separate TV ads that spotlighted both his own fair-trade stance and the free-trade position of his opponent, incumbent Rick Santorum. "I'll oppose any trade law that sends American jobs overseas," Casey promised in one of those ads.

Similarly, incoming Rhode Island Senator Sheldon Whitehouse may have shared the opposition of his opponent, incumbent Republican Lincoln Chafee, to the Iraq War, but they were diametrically opposed on the trade issue. Chafee, like many moderate House Republicans who lost this November (including the most moderate, Iowa's Jim Leach), was a consistent supporter of free-trade agreements, while Whitehouse proclaimed on the campaign trail that "[i]t's time to reject trade deals like NAFTA and CAFTA that fail to protect American

jobs." And even though the seat isn't listed as a Democratic pickup, the replacement of retiring Vermont Senator James Jeffords by democratic socialist Bernie Sanders marks yet one more shift from a free-trade incumbent to a fair-trade new arrival.

Indeed, this year's election was the greatest victory for fair-trade forces in many years. Citizens Trade Watch counts 27 of the 29 incoming House Democrats who picked up Republican seats as critics of free trade. The new House Democrat most frequently cited as the most conservative, North Carolina's Heath Shuler, ran ads against his Republican incumbent opponent for his failure to oppose CAFTA, and spoke repeatedly about the need to raise the minimum wage.

This summer, the president's fast-track authority to negotiate trade deals expires, and the elections doomed any effort to extend it. "Congress is done with ceding all trade authority to the president," Brown told me.

If fair trade was one theme echoed in the campaigns of virtually every victorious Democrat this year, another was greater public investment in alternative energy programs. For Democrats, the issue was a three-fer: It positioned them on the side of national security against the oil companies; it was an urgent response to global warming; and it was their only platform plank that called for creating skilled and well-paying jobs. Such a program has been advanced for the past few years by the labor-backed Apollo Alliance, which has called for programs that would create roughly 3 million new jobs, to be paid for chiefly by tax credits. Legislation creating this kind of program would win wide support in the new Democratic caucuses.

The new-model Democrats who emerged from the 2006 elections may differ on cultural questions, how to get out of Iraq, and hiking taxes on the rich. Some of their differences—such as those over warrantless wiretapping—may lead to real internal conflict. Most won't—either because the differences aren't that great, or the issues are ones that the party leadership needn't bring to a vote. What unites the party is a populist perspective that follows as the night the day the current era of Republican-sponsored plutocracy.

Can the Democrats suppress their cultural differences and stress their economic commonalities, as they did in the days of their New Deal majorities? Can they win back the working-class whites who've been lost to them since the days of Robert Kennedy? Those are long-term challenges, but this year's elections certainly put the Democrats on that road. **TAP**

Research assistance by Jim Cavan.



***"Organized labor is very important because everyone needs an agent."**
— Jim Webb*

Gut Instincts

In 2006, the Democrats belatedly learned to connect with voters emotionally. A little political nerve—and understanding of voters' neurons—goes a long way.



BY DREW WESTEN

IN POLITICS, WE TEND TO THINK IN TERMS OF issues and policies. And as the dust begins to settle on the midterm elections, pollsters and pundits have begun to settle on the meaning of the elections: “Voters were angry about Iraq,” or “Voters were disgusted by corruption in Washington,” or the economy finally mattered.

Just six months ago, the electorate was split on Iraq, corruption had little traction, and even pocketbook issues were off the radar screen. What changed? My own research as a psychologist—and a close political observer—as well as a close reading of 40 years of electoral history, suggests that, in the final analysis, what matters most in elections is what voters are *feeling*—whether they’re excited, proud, angry, or afraid. Iraq didn’t suddenly become a quagmire. Jack Abramoff didn’t suddenly start passing around a little cash. A stagnant minimum wage didn’t suddenly start pinching working families. Feelings matter because they push voters’ buttons—and in turn determine the buttons voters push.

In the 2006 election, the Democrats won because they finally connected on a visceral level, and the twin towers that had been working for Republicans since 9-11—fear and hate—just weren’t smoldering anymore.

WINNING STATES OF MIND

With all our focus on issues and policy debates, on red states and blue states, what’s easy to forget is the voters’ state of mind. Our brains are filled with networks of associations—bundles of thoughts, feelings, images, and ideas that have become connected over time, so that activation of one part of a network activates the rest. When a politician says “liberal,” activation spreads in voters’ brains to whatever is associated with it. For most Americans, that means *elite, tax and spend, out of touch, Massachusetts*, and a whole host of associations that activate negative emotions.

That’s branding. It’s branding so effective that no Democratic presidential nominee has dared call himself a liberal in over 20 years—and no self-proclaimed liberal has won in over four decades. If you shape voters’ networks, you shape their feelings. And if you shape their feelings, you win elections.

Shaping the networks that shape the electoral

landscape is about linking one thought, idea, image, or feeling to another. Branding is nothing but effective dot-connecting. Republicans kept winning because they have been connecting the dots so successfully that even good progressives can’t even say “liberal” without cringing. The Republicans lost this election because they were no longer the only ones connecting the dots.

The Iraq War was a disaster in June, but it wasn’t an *electoral* disaster for the right until the Democrats, emboldened by polls, more critical media coverage, and Ned Lamont’s initially successful anti-war insurgency in August, began to connect the dots—for example, to the idea of a civil war. Once that dot started to become connected in voters’ minds, it followed that our soldiers were fighting in someone else’s civil war. And then voters got angry.

It also helped that the media, and then the Democrats, began challenging the crucial connection between two dots the Republicans had connected, unchallenged, since 2002, under the rubric of the “war on terror”: Saddam (hence Iraq) and Osama (hence terrorism). The Democrats connected the dots to suggest that Bush’s failure on Iraq made him untrustworthy on terrorism. Conversely, if Iraq wasn’t connected to the “war on terror,” then what were we doing in Iraq? Until late in the summer of 2006, the Republicans were the only ones telling a coherent story—on Iraq, terrorism, or virtually anything else that mattered to the public.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

It is no accident that the Democratic Party began to run away with the election only in October, when its candidates all over the country ran ad after ad connecting Republican candidates to their increasingly unpopular president. Republicans tried to run, but they couldn’t hide from the association. Aristotle articulated the basic principle 2,300 years ago: If people experience two things together enough times, they will associate them. And what both Pavlov and Freud recognized was that if they associate them strongly enough, the feelings activated by one will be activated by the other.

Some of the most effective Democratic ads were the ones that not only linked the president and his unpopular war with a local candidate but used film

In 2006, the Democrats finally connected on a visceral level, and the Republican twin towers of fear and hate just weren’t smoldering anymore.





Branded: Harold Ford Jr.

clips of the candidate using phrases such as “stay the course” that were already indelibly linked to George W. Bush. Equally effective were ads that connected inconvenient dots—such as an ad run by Bob Casey against Rick Santorum, versions of which ultimately ran all over the country, which included the following narration and images:

Narrator: *Rick Santorum's record?* [An image of Santorum appears, against the backdrop of the Capitol, with words superimposed to underscore the narration] *Voted three times to give himself a pay raise* [An image appears of a working-class woman hard at work] *while voting 13 times against raising the minimum wage.* [An image appears of a smiling Santorum sitting next to a grinning George Bush, with words again underscoring the narrative] *And he votes 98 percent of the time with George Bush. Even to privatize Social Security.*

What made this ad so powerful were three features. First, it connected the dots between Santorum's generosity to himself and his lack of generosity to the hard-working men and women of Pennsylvania. Each of those facts alone carried little weight for many voters. But put them together, and you begin putting together a network that tells a story about the kind of person who would raise his own salary by more money than a

person working 40 hours a week even *earns*.

Second, networks link more than words. The most powerful networks—the ones most likely to stick in voters' minds and to elicit emotion—are the ones that link words and ideas with visual images (e.g., the hard-working woman on top of whom were superimposed the words, “Voted 13 Times Against Raising the Minimum Wage”) and sounds (e.g., the narrator's voice and inflection, as he contrasted Santorum's pay raise with the minimum wage, underscoring the juxtaposition).

Third, whereas Democrats have often numbed the electorate with facts and figures, the 98 percent figure linked Santorum so powerfully to Bush that it made clear, as Casey put it in an interview on *Meet the Press*, “Tim, when you have two politicians in Washington that agree 98 percent of the time, one of them's really not necessary.”

FLYING HATE BELOW THE RADAR

On Election Day, Democrats outflanked Republicans in every closely contested Senate race except one: Tennessee. At first blush, this is surprising, given that Harold Ford Jr., like so many of the other candidates who defeated Republican incumbents (Bob Casey, Sherrod Brown, and Claire McCaskill, for example), was an emotionally compelling candidate. However, if we take a look at the way the

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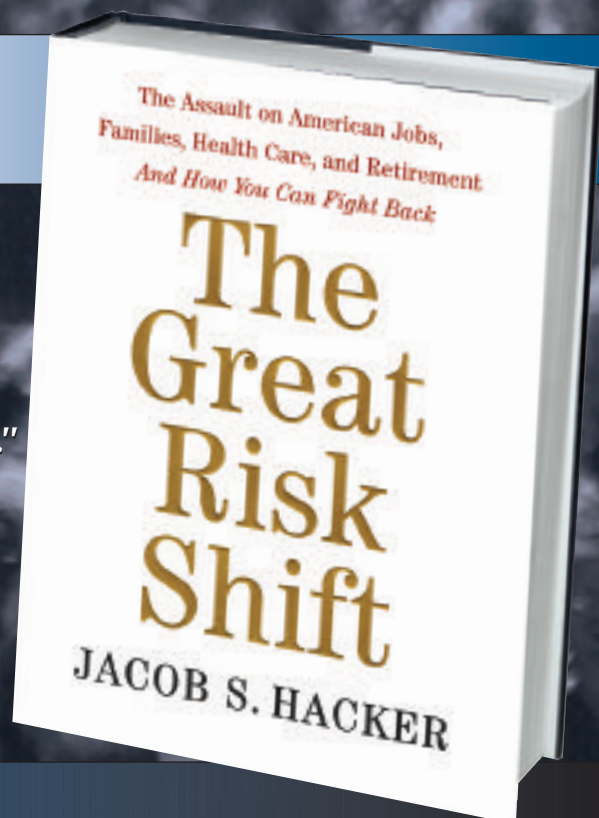
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Republicans used a sophisticated understanding of how networks operate, we can see both the limits of conventional analyses of the ad campaign (“Was it racist, or wasn’t it?”) that led to the rapid decline in Ford’s poll numbers, and what his campaign might have done to counteract it.

The infamous ad, created by a protégé of Karl Rove, was actually part of a broader stealth campaign orchestrated by now Senator-elect Bob Corker and the Republican National Committee. The stealth attack, designed to fly far enough below the radar to allow “plausible deniability” of racist intent, capitalized on the way neural networks work. If I were to ask you to name the first American automobile company that comes to mind, many of you would say “Ford,” even though you could just as easily have responded with one of the other Big Three. The reason is that I’ve just “primed” your neural networks with Harold *Ford*, putting anything associated with “Ford” at a heightened state of unconscious activation.

The Republican campaign against Harold Ford Jr. played these kinds of networks like a fiddle at Opryland. As Corker fell slightly behind Ford in the polls, he began describing himself as the “real Tennessean,” using as a cover story that Ford was a city slicker from Washington. This was a curious charge to make, given that Corker had been attacking Ford and his family for being part of a Tennessee political machine (although once again Corker had plausible deniability because Ford had spent part of his childhood in Washington). The Republican National Committee then ran an ad the Corker campaign disavowed once it drew national attention, allowing him to claim distance while taking advantage of its effects. But Corker then followed it up with another ad of his own that makes clear that the ads were coordinated.

The ad that drew media interest began with a scantily clad white woman declaring excitedly, “I met Harold at the *Playboy* party!” She returns at the end of the ad, with a seductive wink, saying “Harold, call me.” The obvious goal was to activate a network about black men having sex with white women, something about which many white men, including those who are not consciously prejudiced, still feel queasy.

The “call me” line came just after the ad had ostensibly ended with the following words on the screen: “Harold Ford. He’s Just Not Right.” When I first saw the ad, I thought the syntax was peculiar. What did they mean by “He’s just not right?” That’s a term often used to describe someone with a psychiatric problem, and no one was suggesting that Ford was deranged.

Then I realized what was wrong. If you were



going to use that syntax, you’d say “He’s just not right *for Tennessee*.” What the viewer of the ad is not aware of (unless he or she is Tweetie Bird, or has trouble pronouncing r’s), is that another network is being activated unconsciously. This second network was primed not only by the racial associations to the ad itself but by the broader campaign emphasizing that Ford isn’t “one of us”: “He’s just not *white*.”

Then came a Corker radio ad, whose cover story was again to compare and contrast Corker and Ford on the extent to which they’re really Tennesseans. Music plays continuously in the background, but every time the narrator turns to talk about Ford, the listener is exposed to the barely audible sound of an African tom-tom. This is the closest ad we have seen to the RATS ad run by George W. Bush in 2000 against Al Gore, which subliminally presented the word RATS when talking about Gore. At the time, the Bush campaign quickly dismissed the idea that a “subliminal” appeal, as then-Governor Bush called it, could have any effect.

However, my colleague Joel Weinberger and I were not so sure. We ran an experiment on the Internet in which we subliminally flashed the word RATS before a photo of an anonymous candidate, and sure enough, it significantly increased people’s negative feelings toward him. It had seemed unlikely to me that the word RATS had accidentally found its way into an ad that cost millions of dollars to produce and air. The ads run against Ford suggest that Rove and crew are well aware of recent research on subliminal priming. It is difficult otherwise to explain the tom-toms, and I have not heard an alternative explanation for them.

Unfortunately, as with the “Willie Horton” ad run against Michael Dukakis in 1988, the Democrats lacked either the knowledge or the nerve to respond with the only known antidote to racial ap-



Harold, Call Me: And he’s just not white.



Clinton: Could he have helped against Corker?

peals made below the radar of consciousness: Make them conscious. A large body of research suggests that the vast majority of Americans today—including the vast majority of rural Southerners—do not believe that the color of a person's skin should have a bearing on the way they vote, and they consciously value fairness. If they knew someone was deliberately manipulating them with quasi-subliminal messages, they would be angry at the perpetrator, and it would backfire.

RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS

Harold Ford Jr. could not have been the messenger, as he well knew (evidenced by his muted response), because doing so would have activated another network that would have blown up in his face: "Black person crying racism." What he needed was a Southern white elder statesman to do it for him. Suppose, for example, Bill Clinton, who stumped for Ford in the final days of the campaign, had addressed himself directly to Corker in a speech:

Mr. Corker, what you have done injecting race into this campaign is a disgrace. The people of this state know what a skunk smells like, and they know when they've been sprayed. You knew exactly what you were doing when you ran that ad with the white woman saying with a wink, "Call me,

Harold." The first time I saw that ad, a phrase came to my mind that I hadn't heard in 40 years: "All they want is our white women." And if it came to my mind, it came to a lot of people's minds. And that was just the point.

The Reverend Martin Luther King understood people's feelings about interracial dating and marriage 40 years ago. He knew that even decent people who harbored no ill will toward black people could be made uncomfortable if you got them to picture a black man with a white woman. He didn't want the rights of his children, and millions of others, to get caught up in people's feelings about what they called back then the "mixing" of the races, so he made his intentions clear: "I want the white man to be my brother," he said, "not my brother-in-law."

So when you realized you couldn't beat a strong, straight-talking, devoutly religious young black man named Harold Ford Jr. for Senate in the state of Tennessee in a fair fight, you decided to beat him however you could. So you started talking on the stump about how Harold Ford Jr., whose family has lived in this state for decades—who was baptized in a church right here in Tennessee—wasn't *really* from Tennessee, that he wasn't *really* one of *us*. Who'd you mean by us, Bob?

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And how 'bout those tom-toms? That was a nice touch. You could pretend you had nothing to do with the "Call me, Harold" ad. You could say that somehow the Republican Party just put it out there without your knowledge, and when people started to call it racist, you could come out and piously demand that it be taken off the air.

But then how do you explain those radio ads with the subliminal African tom-toms? Did you really think you could get away with trying to influence people with subliminal racist messages, saying, "Don't vote for Harold Ford, he's of African descent?"

Let me tell *you* something about the good and decent people of Tennessee, Mr. Corker. They aren't racists like you. They're God-loving people who believe that regardless of the color of your skin, we're all God's children.

Just a few weeks ago, the people of Virginia sent George Allen a clear message that we don't tolerate people like the two of you anymore. After he called a fellow Virginian a name because of the color of his skin—and told him he wasn't a *real* Virginian—sound familiar, Bob?—he dropped 10 points in the polls. Why? Because the people of Virginia are decent people, who read their Bible, and know that it preaches love, not hate. And I've been to this state enough times, and prayed with enough people here, to know that the people of Tennessee read that same book.

So you want to know what it means to be a *real* Tennessean? It means to understand the words of our Founding Fathers: that *all* men are created equal.

The difference between Harold Ford Jr. and you isn't in the darkness of your skin. It's in the darkness in of your heart.

Several principles are embodied in this response. First and foremost, it reflects two decades of research showing that on matters of race, our better angels are our conscious values. The vast majority of people, including rural Southerners, no longer consciously believe in discrimination. Where people tend to show their prejudice is in their *unconscious* networks, which will likely show the residues of racism for generations. If you let a racist attack linger unconsciously, it will have its intended effects. That's why you want to keep it conscious.

Indeed, Virginia Senator George Allen's campaign went into free-fall after Allen spoke the language of explicit racism. Voters (even those who don't speak Tunisian French) understood precisely what's in a man's heart who calls someone *macaca* because of the color of his skin—especially when he follows it with, "Welcome to America, and the *real* world of Virginia." The difference between Allen and Corker was that Allen made the mistake of



flying his prejudice at the wrong altitude.

A second principle embodied in the response above is that it does not equivocate. It does not invite Corker to engage in a he said/she said. It plainly states that he's a racist in a way that connects the dots so that the message is heard clearly.

Third, it redefines the "we." What Corker and the RNC were trying to do was to portray Ford as a member of an out group, to turn him into something other than "one of us." If you want to win elections, you need people to identify with you, not to see you as foreign or different from them. Brain-scanning data from our laboratory have shown that when people view pictures of their own party's candidates, circuits at the very front of the brain turn a switch on, the same circuits that typically become active when people are thinking about themselves. The response above would have turned the tables on Corker, to turn *him* into something other than "one of us," to define what good and decent people do and to make clear that he isn't one of them. It contrasts the decent people of Tennessee with racists like Corker, rather than allowing him to connect the implicit dots between "us" and "white people."

Finally, and just as importantly, it conveys a message that a Democrat can be a tough son-of-a-bitch; Democrats aren't going to be messed with. This is important both for the message it sends to the public—that Democrats can be strong and aggressive when attacked, a crucial message in the post-9-11 era—and the one it sends to the Republicans, that they can't get away with the race-baiting and code words they've been using since the 1960s, that they'll pay the price if they try it again.

It wasn't until late in the election that Democrats abandoned warmed-over milquetoast like "Together, we can do better," started connecting the dots they'd left unconnected since 2002, and began to show their teeth. Only then did they earn the respect of the American people. **TAP**

Ford couldn't attack Corker's ad himself; he'd be a black person crying racism.

Drew Westen is a professor at Emory University and author of the forthcoming *The Political Brain*.

Permission to Stand Down

*By mid-March, the Baker-Hamilton Commission will declare **withdrawal from Iraq** a respectable option. That will be a **disaster for Republicans**, and **great news for Democrats** eyeing the White House.*

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

SOMETIME BETWEEN NOW AND MARCH 15, 2007, everything you know about the Iraq debate will change. It won't be because of any dramatic shift in the fortunes of a disastrous war: If current trends continue, the five coming months offer the escalation of the Iraqi civil war, the 3,000th American service death, and more disgraceful blather from the Bush administration that we're about to turn it all around.

But March 15, 2007, is the sell-by date of that argument. That's the deadline for a panel of Washington graybeards, led by former Secretary of State James A. Baker III and 9-11 Commission co-chairman Lee H. Hamilton, to ascend to a podium in downtown Washington, D.C., and issue its recommendations for the future of the U.S. mission in Iraq. (It's possible that the report may be submitted as early as December.) Assembled by Virginia Republican Congressman Frank Wolf earlier this year, the so-called Iraq Study Group has been reviewing every aspect of the war, interviewing its architects, generals, and contractors, traveling to Iraq to consult with the United States' Iraqi interlocutors, and asking our few remaining allies for their perspective. Its work has been shrouded in secrecy. Its only press conference, held September 19, was notable primarily for Baker and Hamilton's steadfast refusal to answer any substantive questions about how it defines terms like "victory" and "defeat," much less what it will recommend the United States do.

Its findings, however, will represent a seismic shift. All indications to this point show that the Iraq Study Group will treat withdrawal as a serious option. When blessed by the foreign-policy adults in the Democratic and Republican parties, extrication will no longer be a fringe liberal position—rather, it will

be the perspective of the Washington centrist consensus. David Ignatius in *The Washington Post* has already called the panel a *deus ex machina* for a Bush administration flailing on what to do next in Iraq. War hawks also understand the panel's potential to reconfigure the debate: Writing in the *Weekly Standard*, Office of Special Plans veteran Michael Rubin claimed that "many appointees [to the Iraq Study Group] appeared to be selected less for expertise than for their hostility to President Bush's war on terrorism and emphasis on democracy."

But viewing Baker and Hamilton's work as primarily intended for a Bush administration unwilling to change its approach is a mistake. It's true that the day after the midterm victories by the Democrats, Bush accepted the resignation of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and replaced him with a member of the commission, his father's CIA director, Robert M. Gates. But the commission itself is under no such illusion that it will have much more than cosmetic impact on the administration. When I asked someone close to the Iraq Study Group if the group intends to save Bush from himself, the source laughed. The greatest utility Baker and Hamilton's report will provide, he suggested, is for Bush's would-be successors. In one fell swoop, the commission is likely to transform the nascent 2008 presidential primary fields. By blessing withdrawal, it will unite the Democratic Party—and rip the Republican Party wide open, along its most volatile fault line.



IGNATIUS' ENTHUSIASM FOR THE BAKER-HAMILTON COMMISSION is hardly unique. The trauma of Iraq, mixed with widespread Washington disillusionment with Bush over the war, has led to general giddiness over the prospect of a team of establishment wisemen riding in to rescue the country.

That's as it was intended. Last March, Wolf established the panel in frustration with the direction of the war and the disingenuous rhetoric about it from the White House. With institutional support provided by the nonpartisan, congressionally funded United States Institute of Peace, Baker and Hamilton joined with the leading elder statesmen of both parties: Gates; Democratic rainmaker Vernon Jordan; Reagan-era Attorney General Edwin Meese III; retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; Bill Clinton's chief of staff Leon Panetta and Defense Secretary William Perry; Alan K. Simpson, the former senator from Wyoming; and ex-Virginia Governor and Senator Chuck Robb.

Each member commands instant deference from the Washington elite, a position enhanced by the one stance that Baker has publicly endorsed: bipartisanship, which is catnip to elite organs like the *Post* editorial page. Speaking to George Stephanopoulos, the former secretary of state promised to "take this thing out of politics," and declined to issue his report before the midterm elections. The pundits swooned. "To get most American troops out of Iraq over the next year will require more patience at home, and a lot less partisan bickering," gushed Ignatius.

The bipartisan cache Baker and Hamilton have accrued will be a massive spoonful of sugar for the harsh medicine it is to dispense. While the panel has labored mightily to operate behind the scenes—its late-August trip to Iraq went completely under the press radar—over the last few weeks, word has started to leak out about what recommendations it will issue. Sources close to the commission caution against reading too much into its expert-group reports. But the Baker panel clearly is flirting with the most radical upending of Iraq policy conceivable.

While the commissioners tried to stay silent, some have tipped their hands. In September, commissioner Leon Panetta wrote an op-ed for his hometown newspaper, the *Monterey County*

Herald. His column drips with disgust over how the war "could give al-Qaeda a base for terrorism throughout this critical region." He has nothing but praise for the U.S. troops and civilians in Iraq, but Panetta is under few illusions about the utility of the mission. Although he doesn't say outright that the cause is lost, he sees the midnight hour approaching fast. "The present effort to secure Baghdad cannot succeed without political reconciliation. Some believe we will know the answer to that in the next three to six months," Panetta wrote.

On October 12, Eli Lake, the national-security correspondent for *The New York Sun*, broke the first big Baker-Hamilton Commission story: Its working groups on politics and military strategy had ruled out "victory" as Bush defines it—a U.S.-assisted defeat of the Iraqi insurgency and subsequent sectarian reconciliation. In two papers, "Stability First" and "Redeploy and Contain," the options presented by the panel's working groups to the commissioners are stark. The former calls for abandoning Iraqi democracy as a war aim and substitutes instead a massive push to put a multilateral face on the occupation. The latter, as the title suggests, calls for a staggered withdrawal from Iraq. According to Lake, if the former—the internationalization of the occupation—is unobtainable, withdrawal must occur. Two commission sources told me Lake's reporting is accurate.

THE FIRST INTENDED AUDIENCE FOR THE BAKER-Hamilton Commission is the Bush administration, from whom *tout* Washington is hoping against hope for a massive adjustment of course. But as Baker himself has acknowledged, "There'll probably be some things in our report that the administration might not like." Doyle McManus of the *Los Angeles Times* observed, "It's unclear how willing Bush is to change his strategy."

Actually, the answer is very clear: Bush has shown absolutely no willingness to change his strategy beyond the cosmetic and politically necessary step of jettisoning his long-held "stay the course" rhetoric. Witness his post-election press conference: Bush used the Baker commission as a totem, vowing to listen to its recommendations, but he simultaneously equated defeat in Iraq with withdrawal. Baker-Hamilton isn't going to change that—nor will the arrival of Gates at Defense. For one thing, Bush has the prickliest of relationships with the wisemen of his father's administration, as Bob Woodward meticulously documents in *State of Denial*. For another, it's not easy to take back a statement like "We're not leaving, so long as I'm the president," which Bush issued in August from the White House podium.

The impact on the administration of Gates' arrival as defense secretary is unclear. Gates generally possesses hawkish instincts—he was accused by his subordinates at the CIA in the 1980s of politicizing intelligence to promote Ronald Reagan's Cold War impulses and was a major figure in the Iran-Contra scandal. However, he has not tipped his hand on what he believes the right course for the war will be. His major selling point is that at this point in the Bush presidency, *any* holdover from his father's ad-



Daddy's Guys Come Calling: Bush meets with Baker-Hamilton Commission members, June 14, 2006.

ministration—except, of course, Cheney—is widely seen as representing a return to internationalist GOP moderation. (While Gates may not be a Scowcroftian dove, his relationship with Cheney has been frosty, as well.) According to some press accounts, Gates has privately told friends how distraught he is over the incompetence and mismanagement of the war by Rumsfeld and his crew. What course changes Gates will advocate remains unclear. He may provide a facade of moderation rather than substantive course corrections.

As for the Baker-Hamilton report, keeping “this thing out of politics,” as Stephanopoulos suggested, is the last thing the panel will do. While it has bypassed the midterms, it will play right into the 2008 primaries. Simply put, the panel’s recommendations are a dream come true for the Democratic field, and a nightmare in the making for the Republicans.

The biggest single issue dividing the Democratic Party going into the 2008 elections is Iraq. Senator Hillary Clinton, the front-runner, has calibrated her position on the war with what the *Atlantic Monthly’s* Josh Green called “fugue-like” complexity in a recent profile. She voted for it; vociferously criticized Bush for practically everything about it; and feints toward the exits while still warning about the dangers of “failure.” Liberals inclined to either like Clinton or respect her impulses find her lack of leadership on the war maddening. Bloggers have been known to call Clinton a “Vichy Democrat.”

Even though voters have turned against the war, opposing it too vociferously has proven dicey for Democrats. Criticize it too harshly and you’re unpatriotic. Stick with it and you become detached from reality. Quibble on the margins and you become inconsistent. John Kerry learned in 2004 how untenable criticism of the war is while supporting its aims. It was no accident that both Kerry and running mate John Edwards repudiated the war and apologized for authorizing it shortly after losing. Both had their eyes fixed on 2008—and becoming the anti-Hillary: the candidate with the most compelling message against the war to contrast with Clinton’s hawkish impulses and Iraq-related vacillations. The long-shot candidacy of proudly dovish Senator Russell Feingold made sense only in the context of Iraq. And the probable entry of Barack Obama, who dissented on Iraq every step of the way, speaks to the Democratic difficulty in coming up with a blemish-free opposition to the war. What’s more, if the party opts to make *withdrawal* its official position, Al Gore, the man kicked out of the Washington establishment by his fervent opposition to the war, looks ever more like a tribune of wisdom.

How this would play in a general election is a big unknown. But Baker-Hamilton could help, by blessing withdrawal far in advance of primary season. The report will reinforce the trends of the



***James Baker:
Bush’s ticket out
of Iraq—pro-
vided, of course,
he wants to go.***

midterm election, which, according to a senior Democratic House leadership aide speaking a week before the vote, will do much to stiffen Democratic spines against the war. And the commission, says the aide, will “echo and rationalize what conclusions people have already come to about the need for a different direction. That doesn’t mean just providing political cover, but like many commissions it’ll be two steps behind where the public already is.”

The effect of the commission’s report on the Democratic presidential field will be immediate: It would clear the field for other divisions to shape the primary contest. All of a sudden, the differences between Clinton, Obama, Feingold, Kerry, Edwards, et al., would boil down to the relatively pedestrian question of whether the troops should leave in six months or 12—allowing freewheeling debate on issues beyond Iraq to determine the nomination.

Of course, that’s the theory. Some liberal activists may still prefer to make the 2002 vote on the war a key issue. “I don’t know many people for whom it’s the only litmus test, but it says something about your political character if you take the path of endorsing the war versus if you don’t,” says Eli Pariser of MoveOn.org. “A question many people will ask themselves is, ‘Do we want to hire someone who made such a bad decision versus one who didn’t?’” Pariser says he’s hesitant to prognosticate what impact the Baker-Hamilton Commission will have on the Democratic field. Nonetheless, even if it can’t get rid of *every* Democratic grievance on the war, it will bring the Democratic Party a silver bullet: a mainstream-blessed position on the war in line with both the liberal base and a growing portion of the electorate at large.

FOR THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, THE REVERSE IS TRUE: IF Baker-Hamilton includes withdrawal as an option, Republicans—and especially their presidential hopefuls—will scatter. Here the Democrats possess an institutional advantage: Its voters are firmly against the war. The Republican base, however, has no equivalent clarity. Right wingers such as Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania may have clung to the Iraq War during the midterms, but he was one of very few Republicans on the campaign trail to enthusiastically back the occupation. Bush’s fellow Texan, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, recently said she would not have voted for the war if she knew in 2002 what she knows in 2006. Many elected Republicans have disassociated themselves from “staying the course,” although, with the exception of apostate Congressman Walter Jones, who represents a Marine-heavy North Carolina district, practically none have called for withdrawal. Some have attacked the war by proxy. In Kentucky, Congresswoman Anne Northrup called for Donald Rumsfeld’s resignation—a move that didn’t spare her defeat at the hands of pro-withdrawal Democrat Jon Yarmuth.

This basic confusion about what Iraq means for a conservative or a Republican voter is likely to throw the 2008 contest into turmoil, especially if the Iraq Study Group holds out withdrawal as a serious option. The field, as it stands, features hardcore Iraq warriors like Senator John McCain, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and ex-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, as well as lesser lights with unclear positions, like Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, and even the dovish Senator Chuck Hagel. Some GOP strategists—

particularly those close to the neoconservatives—believe that no GOP candidate, with the exception of Hagel, will renounce the war, regardless of Baker-Hamilton conclusions. But Richard Viguerie, a longtime Republican activist who is against the war, sees an old knight in shining new armor: “Newt.” According to Viguerie, the former speaker of the House’s support for the war is fairly elastic. “Newt can play better than most others, as the need arises. Newt can change pretty quickly, and I would think he’s more likely to adapt his position to primary voters than other candidates are,” he says. “Newt is more likely than anyone else to back disengagement while still keeping the flags flying high.” (Gingrich’s press aide did not return repeated phone calls.)

And that speaks to the larger problem for GOP candidates: Republican voters themselves hold mutable views on the war. “If the president turns around and changes his mind about Iraq, Republicans will go ‘OK,’” says Grover Norquist, an architect and beneficiary of the demolished Republican congressional majority. “It’s not like being pro-life, where if he changed his mind on that issue, the base says no way. No one voted for Bush because of the invasion of Iraq or a need to maintain the occupation. ... [S]hould the president shift his position, ... the party will follow, and the movement will follow.” Some go even further. For Richard Viguerie, “conservative voters and the grass-roots activists are really one and the same in their view of Iraq as the American people as a whole: They’re not sure why we’re there. ... The American people, as well as conservatives, have no problem extricating themselves from Iraq, and the sooner the better.”

Already the fissures are showing. In September, John Warner, the senior Virginia senator who chaired the Armed Services Committee, began flirting with a new congressional authorization for the occupation, which would force Bush to outline a

new strategy for a continued presence and put it to a very hostile vote in a Democratic Congress.

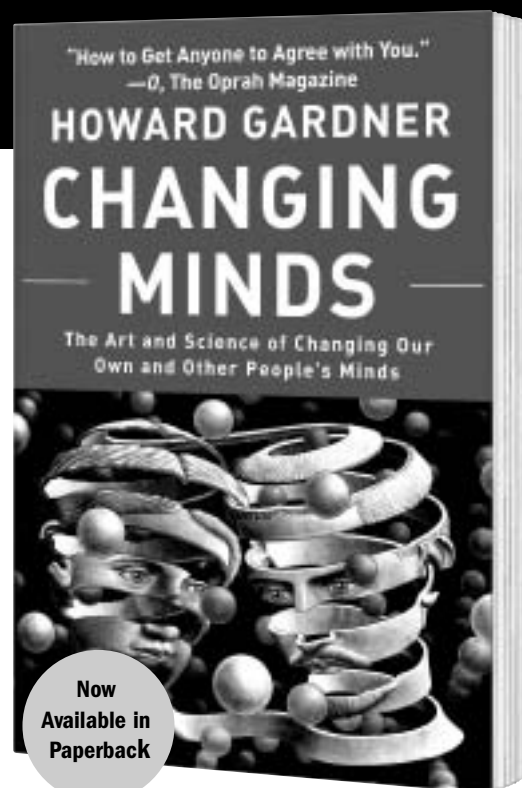
What this would mean for the 2008 GOP nomination isn’t entirely clear. Romney has yet to put forward a forceful position on the war. Even Giuliani, whose hawkishness has never been in doubt, speaks more of the war on terrorism than the war in Iraq, allowing himself some crucial wiggle room. But the candidate with the most to gain—and, perhaps, lose—from a GOP drift toward withdrawal is Arizona Senator John McCain, who may be even more hawkish than Bush on Iraq. Partially that’s an outgrowth of his national-greatness militarism. But it’s also smart primary politics—for now. “McCain’s only known conservative position is his support for the



Lee Hamilton:
His report may
unify Democrats
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war,” says Norquist, who has long been at loggerheads with McCain on virtually everything. “He’s broken with the movement on everything else.” Due to McCain’s conservative apostasies on every-

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thing from campaign finance reform to torture, he may be vulnerable to attacks from his right—save on his support for the war.

Most McCain enthusiasts view this as his strength. “I think John McCain has shown he is willing go against the Republican establishment, or any establishment, when he thinks it’s justified,” says Cliff May of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, who is one of the Iraq Study Group’s expert advisers. One McCain adviser believes it is inconceivable that McCain will abandon the war, Baker or no Baker, and that this loyalty will endear him even further to GOP stalwarts—especially if his primary rivals go wobbly. However, if the GOP base sours on the war once it unmoors itself from Bush, McCain could find himself with *no* selling points, aside from his character, to bring to the Republican faithful. Still, another McCain adviser views the Iraq Study Group as the last chance for McCain to repudiate the war before the primaries. Indeed, while McCain has hardly rushed for the exits, on election night he softened a bit on CNN: “I understand the frustration that Americans feel. I feel that frustration as well,” he said.

The field—and the GOP base—doesn’t have much time to find a position. Baker and Hamilton have vowed to issue their report by March 15. Once this happens, Democrats will have their best-ever shot for a strong *and* popular antiwar message. Republicans will need to figure out, once and for all, what they believe about the war: Do they stay in Iraq despite the manifold failures and against the tide of public opinion? Or do they embrace withdrawal, and leave *themselves* open to the next wave of flip-flopper ads?

The most obvious locus for the impact of the Iraq Study Group will be Congress. Though our interview took place before the election, the senior House Democratic leadership aide thought, no matter what, 2007 would be a watershed year for Iraq policy. “It’s inconceivable that, with or without the Baker commission, we wouldn’t see the next Congress exerting greater influence to move in a different direction, whether it matches [the commission’s] recommendations or not. A lot of people are going to come back [to Washington] very chastened by what they heard from the voters on Iraq. That is running pretty widely through both caucuses. Congress will take more of a leadership role overseeing and changing direction.” The aide won’t discuss what options the next Congress might consider, but suggests that the Democratic caucus will meet during the lame-duck congressional session ending the year to plot its course.

As the election has surely shown, voters were ready for change on Iraq. And thanks to Baker, those who back *staying* in Iraq, not those who back leaving, will suddenly find themselves occupying a fringe position—which will put Republicans in a tight spot. “By 2008, it’s even more important that the war be in the rearview mirror, meaning that we’re leaving,” Norquist says. If not, the Iraq War might well continue down the path from folly to failure to Democratic advantage. And if and when it does, Democrats will have an old Bush family consigliere to thank. **TAP**

Spencer Ackerman is a senior correspondent for The American Prospect.

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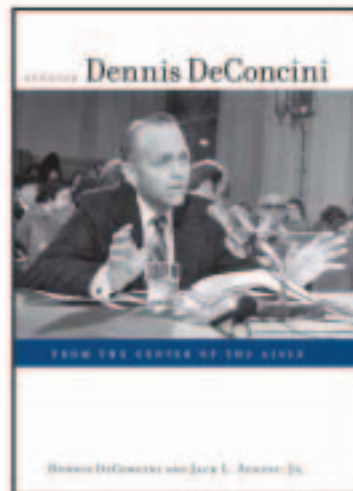
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Civil war rages
at the ACLU, as the old
executive director attacks the
new one. It's all about first principles.
Or wartime exigencies. Or stresses of growth.
Or generational change. Or Oedipal tensions.
Or quarrelsome DNA. Or all of the above.

BY TARA McKELVEY

Ira Glasser is a fighter. He's been defending freedom of speech, the right to privacy, and the right to due process for more than 30 years through his work with the American Civil Liberties Union, including 23 years as the head of the organization. ¶ Of late, he sounds just as combative when he talks about his successor, Anthony D. Romero—especially when the conversation veers toward Romero's views on the Patriot Act. "Anthony said *that?*" Glasser, 68, asks. His voice goes up a notch. And before anybody can clarify Romero's remarks about the Patriot Act, Glasser's off on a tear about his former protege.

"I feel that he's betrayed some core ACLU principles and it's a question of whether or not that's right," Glasser says. "He did stuff no executive director should ever do."

In August, Glasser signed a mission statement for a Save the ACLU Web site designed to protest Romero's leadership. The site, which was launched in September, as of press time has 613 "dissidents," as Glasser puts it. With references to "blacklists," "spying," and "informal campaigns to purge the ACLU of its internal critics," the site evokes Stalin, McCarthyism, and other civil-libertarian chambers of horrors. The home page displays photos of vintage antiwar activists, including one woman who's handing a flower to military police; protestors in braids and wire-rimmed glasses; and an older man with bushy eyebrows with (apparently) a policeman's hand clamped over his mouth. All of which illustrate the ACLU's previous work in upholding freedom of expression in the United States—contrasted, presumably, with a more recent propensity toward "silencing dissent," as the Web site proclaims, within the organization.

The internal, though very public, fight could leave the casual observer with a major misimpression about how the ACLU is actually faring. Since Romero started his job as executive director on September 4, 2001, ACLU membership has increased 91 percent—from 300,000 members to 573,000 members. The number of national staff positions has grown from 186 to 379, and net assets of the ACLU Foundation have increased from \$122 million to \$221 million—an 81 percent jump.

The success of the organization hasn't been limited to membership or fund raising. ACLU lawyers have filed more than a dozen lawsuits against the Bush administration, one of which, *ACLU v. NSA*, successfully challenged the National Security Agency's warrant-less surveillance program. (Full disclosure: I'm a plaintiff.) In August, a federal judge, Anna Diggs Taylor, ruled the wiretapping program violated the constitution, and the government is now appealing the decision.

Much of the ACLU's growth and success reflects the increasing importance of civil liberties in a post-9-11 world. But Romero, who was Glasser's own candidate for the post, also deserves credit. By most accounts, Romero, 41, who was the first execu-

tive director in 39 years to be hired from outside the organization (he had worked for both the Ford and Rockefeller foundations), has used the managerial skills he honed in the foundation world to bring the ACLU into the 21st century.

That effort also may explain some of the hostility he's garnered from Glasser and other old-guard ACLU supporters, including famed civil-rights lawyer Norman Siegel and free-speech authority Nat Hentoff. Opponents say Romero has violated long-time principles of the ACLU, which have been all the more important in the post-9-11 climate. But on closer evaluation, their objections seem to be as much over style than over substance. They threaten to overshadow his accomplishments all the same.

At an October 16 ACLU luncheon event titled, "Torture, Secrecy, and Surveillance," Romero bantered with Joseph C. Wilson IV, husband of former CIA undercover operative Valerie Plame, in front of more than 700 ACLU members in a ballroom at the Washington Marriott. Romero is good at this kind of informal exchange. He listened attentively as Wilson described his battle with administration officials in recent months, suggesting that President Bush considers the Constitution to be nothing more than "a goddamned piece of paper." Romero nodded eagerly and leaned forward. "A piece of paper you can shred," he said. Then he pretended to hold up a sheet of paper and feed it into a shredder.

It was a playful gesture—and a self-referential one. Less than a year after he took over his post, it was a paper shredder, Romero's somewhat impetuous approach, and his impatience with institutional tradition that first got him in trouble with the old-timers. The incident started when Romero and other members of the staff began destroying old résumés and debris lying around their offices in 2003. This might mean nothing in most offices, but at the ACLU, where the fight to prevent government shredding is a decades-old mandate, it was a major faux pas. Romero continued the practice for some time, and in 2005 a more public fight began. ACLU records manager Janet Linde said the practice of shredding papers

without recording the destroyed documents violated an institutional policy, according to Stephanie Strom, a *New York Times* reporter, in a June 5, 2005, article, “Concerns Arise at A.C.L.U. Over Document Shredding.”

Rather than suffer silently, though, Romero threw a “shred-in.” This was typical of a man who had absorbed the biggest lessons of contemporary management theory: Be flexible; do things in a transparent manner; include your staff whenever possible. So Romero invited staffers into his office and shredded Strom’s article as everyone ate Krispy Kreme doughnuts he’d brought in. “I was lifting morale, reminding everyone not to take people seriously,” Romero explains during a break at the Washington conference. Clearly, a new era had arrived.

One of the first members of his Puerto Rican family to graduate from college, Romero studied international affairs at Princeton University and provided legal assistance to Spanish-speaking families facing eviction through a nonprofit organization, Harlem Legal Services, during his third year at Stanford Law School. He worked for nine years at the Ford Foundation, meeting with Glasser about ACLU programs and the grants they’d received for their work. Over dinner one evening in 2000, Glasser told Romero he was getting ready to retire and suggested he apply for the position of executive director.

“His first instinct was to feel overwhelmed by it all,” says Glasser, who still speaks with affection about the man he’s been publicly criticizing. “I spent a lot of time convincing him he should throw his hat in the ring.”

The ACLU’s board of directors selects the organization’s executive director, but Glasser says he groomed Romero for the position, meeting with him “for many dozens of hours,” and helping him prepare for the interview. (Romero refused to discuss Glasser with me.) In many ways, it was an odd match. On core issues of individual rights and the protection of minorities, the two men have much in common. Still, as ACLU executive director, Glasser played basketball with the guys and took them out to ball games; Romero wears cufflinks and a unicorn tie, prides himself on his rack of lamb (seasoned with tarragon, rosemary, cracked white pepper, and “a little sea salt,” he says), and wanted to cook for them. Glasser is often aggressive on the phone, hammering on points about civil liberties as he talks about the organization. Romero, also a stickler about details of ACLU positions, is more open to discussion. Paper-shredder jokes, talk-show coziness, staff meetings that emphasize an exchange of ideas, even the membership conference itself, have all been features of Romero’s tenure at the ACLU.

Over the years, Romero had impressed many in progressive

institutions with his commitment to civil liberties. Arnie Miller, a long-time ACLU member and a Boston-based executive recruiter for civil-rights organizations, remembers meeting him at La Guardia Airport in New York in 1991. “He told me about his father, who had recently died,” recalls Miller. “He said his father had worked as a waiter at a hotel and that people used to call him, ‘Chico.’ Anthony said, ‘My father wasn’t a boy. He was a man.’ Anthony is a guy who knows first-hand what discrimination is all about.”

Romero received the overwhelming support of the ACLU board during its final selection process. In June 2001, several weeks before his retirement, Glasser gave a speech at a biannual meeting. “I literally bought a baton and handed it to [Romero] and said, ‘This may be the last sport metaphor you ever see, and you may be happy to see it go,’” Glasser recalls. “The bottom line was, we couldn’t have been closer.”

Romero started his job at the ACLU one week before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Within hours, the ACLU started getting calls from journalists inquiring about civil liberties, and they have hardly let up since. “[Glasser] was on a baseball team

that never made it to the playoffs,” says Laura W. Murphy, the former director of the ACLU’s legislative office in Washington. “And right after he left, the team went to the World Series.”

Some people didn’t like the way the game was being played. By the fall of 2002, the paper-shredder controversy had begun. Then in 2003 there was another flap. This was the moment that ACLU member Wendy Kaminer, a Boston lawyer and writer who is now on the Save the ACLU team, realized things had gone wrong. She was at a June 2003 meeting of the board, an 83-member group comprising lawyers and other professionals from across the country, when Romero said he’d forgotten to inform the board about a December 2002 agreement he’d signed with the New York attorney general to settle a dispute over privacy issues.

Kaminer, speaking on the telephone from Boston, says she and her colleagues had no problem with Romero’s settlement of the dispute. The disturbing thing, she says, was the way he had neglected to tell the board members about the agreement and then acted as though the lapse was unimportant. “It became apparent to us that he was not being honest,” says Kaminer, who is a former *American Prospect* columnist and the wife of Woody Kaplan, a former real-estate developer and a major donor to the ACLU.

Even worse, Kaminer says, ACLU President Nadine Strossen and other board members—all of whom are supposed to over-



“Is it King Lear?”—with former executive Ira Glasser (right) feeling betrayed by current executive director Anthony Romero (left), his protégé—one prominent ACLU member wonders.

see the activities of the executive director—didn't seem bothered. On July 11, 2003, Strossen sent Kaminer a "chirpy e-mail," as Kaminer describes it. "She said she just wanted to assure us Anthony was dealing with this issue in the same candid way he always did," says Kaminer. "It was obvious we did not have a president who had oversight. We said, 'Oh, shit. Now we're really in trouble.'"

As Kaminer sees it, the ACLU executive director should inform the board of agreements he's entered on behalf of the organization, seeking board members' counsel when it's appropriate—and the ACLU president should work to ensure that the executive director communicates effectively with the board. But neither of those steps had been taken, Kaminer says.

Then, in 2004, a Ford Foundation executive asked Romero for his advice on dealing with government-recommended restrictions on grant recipients that would help ensure the money would not support terrorist activities. Almost any form of government restrictions on organizations make civil libertarians nervous. Yet Romero didn't exactly object. Instead, he recommended Ford Foundation executives mimic the language of the Patriot Act, and the Ford Foundation eventually included a provision for grant recipients to sign: "You agree that your organization will not promote or engage in violence, terrorism, bigotry, or the destruction of any state." In this way, Romero suggested, senior staff members could ward off accusations they were inadvertently supporting terrorists through their grants. "The Patriot Act is the law," explains Romero. "We can litigate against it. We can lobby against it. We can be vocal about it. But nonprofits are bound by the law."

Some ACLU members weren't pleased. "Because of the vagueness of the word, 'promote,' this new provision would have been an unconstitutional restriction on speech had it been promulgated by the government and not a private corporation," wrote Kaminer and Glasser in an essay, "The Facts of the Matter," posted on the Save the ACLU Web site. "He said the Ford Foundation should just parrot the Patriot Act," says Kaminer. "At the same time, he was raising money at the ACLU based on opposition to the Patriot Act."

In July and August 2004, Glasser e-mailed Romero, criticizing Romero for his Ford Foundation suggestions. Romero "was really angry and upset," recalls Glasser. "He kept responding that I was a father figure to him, and I said that was emotional blackmail. 'This is not a relational thing,' I said. 'I think you're doing grievous injury to the ACLU.'" Their e-mail exchange ended shortly afterward. So did their friendship. "We've seen each other since then," says Glasser. "We always sort of smile and act cordial. There's something almost phony about it."

ACLU board members discussed the Ford Foundation grant restrictions for hours at a July 2004 meeting. (Kaminer says it was four hours; Romero says it was nine.) ACLU leaders eventually turned down Ford Foundation grants to the ACLU worth close to \$2 million, says Romero, which would have been used for national-security projects.

Still, the dissidents were not appeased. Over the past several months, Kaminer and other supporters of the Save the ACLU campaign have been writing a flurry of op-eds and online arti-

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cles about the controversy. “During the past three years, ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero has made what many agree were serious mistakes, some reflecting insensitivity if not hostility to fundamental ACLU values, notably free speech,” write Glasser and Kaminer in “The Facts of the Matter.” “Board President Nadine Strossen and other members of the Executive Committee have not only failed to provide appropriate oversight of Romero; they have helped conceal or cover up his mistakes.”

The ultimate aim of Save the ACLU is to oust Romero. To date, he retains the support of the staff, and the board has made no moves to get rid of him.

In some ways, the battle at the ACLU is business

as usual. The famously combative organization was founded in 1920 to fight for individual rights and is known nearly as much for acrimonious infighting as for its battles against the government. On July 9, 1978, the late J. Anthony Lukas wrote a *New York Times Magazine* article, “The ACLU Against Itself,” about conflict within the organization.

But this time, the battles seem especially pointed. The adversarial relationship between Glasser and Romero, for example—and the way their conflict has spilled out repeatedly in the media—is “highly unprecedented,” says Gara LaMarche, 52, a vice

president of George Soros’ philanthropic organization, the New York-based Open Society Institute (OSI). In an organization like the ACLU, that’s saying a lot.

The fight within the “boisterous—sometimes messy—ACLU family,” as Romero calls it, is in part a reflection of the organiza-

tion’s growth. The expansion of the ACLU has meant more ambitious fund-raising efforts, reaching out to people and organizations beyond an immediate circle of friends and supporters of liberal organizations; formalized, organization-wide, goal-setting rather

than relying on an ad-hoc approach to setting agendas for various departments; and a more inclusive organization that encourages outreach and membership growth. Romero’s decision to hold annual membership meetings is part of this effort.

Perhaps not surprisingly, internal conflicts often accompany the organizational shifts. Clearly, the dispute over the Ford Foundation and other points of contention, including a decision not to abide by any government recommendations on screening employees for suspected terrorist affiliations, have focused on First Amendment issues. But “95 percent” of the disagreements—whether they’re about policy or management positions—do not involve substantive issues, says the ACLU’s former legislative director Murphy. “This is a place where people come to fight,” explains LaMarche, only half-joking. (OSI, where LaMarche works, is a foundation of George Soros, and provides financial support for liberal organizations including *The American Prospect* and the ACLU.) “How do you argue in the ACLU?” he says. “You accuse your opponent of violating the Bill of Rights.”

“Is it *King Lear*?” wonders Miller, the Boston-based executive recruiter, referring to Shakespeare’s drama in which a father feels betrayed by his children. As Miller sees it, Romero has professionalized the organization. And Glasser can’t let go. “I’ve watched a lot of transitions over these 30 years of recruiting—some of them better than others,” says Miller. “This one is pathetic.”

“Ira needs to move on,” says Murphy. “If he wanted to do something to make Karl Rove happy, he’s doing it.”

Meanwhile, Kaminer is working on a book about ethics entitled *Worst Instincts*. “I’ve been very much inspired by my experiences with the ACLU,” she says, describing a “classic group pathology” she observed within the organization during the controversy over Romero’s leadership.

Romero brushes aside questions about his relationship with Glasser. When asked what he’s brought to the ACLU during his tenure, though, he breaks into a smile. “I’ve brought passion,” says Romero. “I love life!”

“I always had a reputation of being a fighter,” says Glasser. “But I hate this. Not only because of the sadness and tragedy of the relational stuff with Anthony but because both sides of the debate believe in good faith they have stood up for the ACLU they love. If I could press a button and none of it would have ever happened, nobody would be happier.” **TAP**

“How do you argue in the ACLU? You accuse your opponent of violating the Bill of Rights,” says Gara LaMarche of the Open Society Institute.

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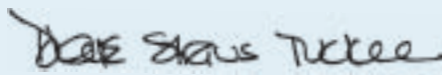
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— "Sanctions Against Sudanese Officials Sought Over Darfur,"
by Colum Lynch, *The Washington Post*, February 23, 2006

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In But Not of Israel

Right-wing Israeli Jews want to redraw borders to shift Israeli Arabs into Palestine. But the Israeli Arabs—even the Islamists—want to stay.

BY JO-ANN MORT

FIVE DAYS INTO ISRAEL'S WAR WITH HEZBOLLAH, I VISITED THE UMM EL-FAHM Gallery in the town whose name it bore. Umm El-Fahm, the largest Muslim community in Israel, with a population of 43,000, anchors the largely Arab Triangle area on the coastal plain just south of Haifa. Outside the gallery, Israeli planes were bombing Lebanon and Hezbollah rockets were detonating nearby. Inside the gallery, Yehudit Bar-Shalom, a ceramicist from nearby Kibbutz Magal, was speaking.

"I felt I was in a dream due to the hospitality of the gallery," she told me. "In all this chaos we are living in, you can do it differently," she told Said Abu-Shakra, a respected artist and the gallery's co-founder. Bar-Shalom reached across the table to Abu-Shakra. "I love you," she said.

Abu-Shakra runs the gallery with the assistance of town leaders and Arab and Jewish arts professionals from across Israel. About one-third of its funding comes from outside the town, including grants from the Israeli and British governments and American Jewish philanthropists. The gallery is known across Israel for exhibiting the work of Jewish and Arab artists—and Yoko Ono. Abu-Shakra also directs a program of arts instruc-

tion for 5,000 children—both Arab and Jewish—annually.

Recently, the Northern Islamic Movement, headquartered in Umm El-Fahm, gave the gallery about six acres so it could expand into a museum. "Before the gallery," says Abu-Shakra, who is the cousin of Umm El-Fahm's previous mayor, Sheikh Raed Salah—leader of the Northern Islamic Movement and recently imprisoned by Israel—"religious life was the prominent activity. It still is, but the gallery brings a different thought. It is connected to everything in Umm El-Fahm."

Which is a lot to be connected to. Though the town was run by Hadash, the Israeli Communist Party, until the late 1980s, since then it has been a stronghold of Raed Salah's Northern

Islamic Movement. Before Israel built its separation fence, suicide bombers came from neighboring Jenin (under control of the Palestinian Authority) through Umm El-Fahm regularly, killing Jews and Arabs alike. In 2000, the town was at the heart of civil unrest that led to the deaths of 13 Arab Israelis by Israeli policemen. This past summer, Sheik Raed led the annual get-together of his Northern Islamic Movement there, proclaiming before 50,000 people that, “The Israeli occupation will leave Jerusalem soon and Jerusalem will be the capital of the Islamic caliphate.”

A small community that is home both to calls for the caliphate and exhibits of Yoko Ono’s art, Um El-Fahm embodies the complexities of existence for the Arab citizens of Israel. Just under 20 percent of Israelis are Arab—or Palestinian citizens of Israel, as most prefer to be called. They comprise about 1 million people, coming largely from families that remained inside Israel after the state was founded in 1948.

With its terraced terrain and more than 20 freshwater springs, Umm El-Fahm could be an oasis. But it’s not. Its unofficial poverty rate is nearly 30 percent, and the Israeli government has long favored the neighboring, though smaller, Jewish towns over Um El-Fahm when providing municipal services.

Today, even the town’s right to remain part of Israel is under assault. In the 2006 national election, ultra-right-winger Avigdor Lieberman of the Russian émigré Israel Beiteinu Party called for the transfer of Umm El-Fahm and adjacent territory, complete with its Arab population, to the future Palestine. Now Lieberman has joined Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s government. He’s supposed to keep hands off of domestic issues, but he was in government no more than a week when he gave interviews reiterating his support for transfer of Arabs outside of Israel, arguing for “exchanges of populations and territory, in order to create the most homogenously Jewish state.”

You might think Umm El-Fahm would be happy to be gerymandered into the new Palestine. But nothing could be further from the truth. Perhaps the deepest of Umm El-Fahm’s complexities is this: It wants to remain part of Israel. Indeed, the townspeople—most especially, young college graduates, many from Israel’s top universities—want to be a more equal part of Israel.

This summer’s war laid bare the great gaps between Israeli Jews and Arabs, and the Arabs’ antipathy to the cultural, social and political aims of Zionism. But a visit to Umm El-Fahm also underscored the economic disparities and unequal opportunities that characterize the two Israels—and the determination of Arabs in Israel to establish a place for themselves. As many of them recognize, moreover, their demand for equality poses a fundamental challenge to Israel’s status as a Jewish state.

“Umm El-Fahm is part of Israel and wants to stay part of Israel,” Sheikh Hashem Mahajne of the Northern Islamic Movement, mayor of Umm El-Fahm for the past two years, told me when we met during last summer’s war.

“I want Umm El-Fahm to become an active participant in all aspects of Israeli life,” he said. He lit a cigarette for himself, offering one to me and to my translator, who took it while I declined. “Americans are crazy about smoking,” he laughed. “It’s not true that the Islamic Movement wants to set up a separate identity,” he insisted, throwing up his hands in exasperation at the question. Asked about his predecessor, Sheikh Raed, and his pronouncements, the mayor put it down to politics: “There is a democratic game, and [the Islamic Movement] is allowed to play the democratic game.”

In fact, it doesn’t play it all the way. One thing that differentiates the Northern Islamic Movement from the more moderate Southern Islamic Movement in Israel is that the Southern movement runs candidates in Knesset elections, while the Northern does not. “It’s not because they don’t acknowledge the state of Israel,” said the mayor. “Right now, their actions outside of the Knesset are more productive.”

If the Northern Islamists vie for seats in the Knesset, they will do well, according to Haifa University sociologist Sammy Smooha, who estimated that “one-third of Israeli Arabs support the Islamic Movement. The Northern Movement’s agenda is to build a separate Muslim society in Israel. That’s what they are doing. The vacuum was created [by Israel’s failure to treat its Arab citizens equally] and the Islamists moved in. They understand that they cannot take over the state. They will continue to act but moderate their activities.”

Umm El-Fahm’s mayor appeared focused on municipal needs. “The Islamic Movement doesn’t belong to the municipality and the municipality doesn’t belong to the Islamic Movement,” he said. “This is a state of law.” He was justifiably proud of his governance, though frustrated by ongoing inequities in the system. “Municipal workers here always get paid because there is tax collection.” Still, “we are one of the poorest cities in Israel,” but “the situation is improving. Business is better. More Jews are coming to the town to shop.”

He interrupted our interview for a call. Speaking in Hebrew, he inquired about the safety of the caller’s children, afterwards explaining that he would be meeting with neighboring Jewish regional councils—including the caller’s—to discuss security. As the war made clear, Umm El-Fahm—along with most of the Arab sector—doesn’t have bomb shelters or adequate warning systems.

Tensions between Jews and Arabs inside Israel increased sharply, of course, during last summer’s war, which highlighted the differing realities of Jewish and Arab life there. One-third of the 43 Israeli citizens killed by Hezbollah rockets were Israeli Arabs. Yet, while polls showed that 18 percent of Israeli Arabs supported Hezbollah, the perception among Jews in Israel was that support was much higher. Right-wing Israeli politicians branded the nation’s Arab citizens “fifth columnists.”

This “mini-storm in Arab-Jewish relations,” said Tel Aviv University historian Eli Rekhess, widened the gap between Jews

Last summer, a Northern Islamic Movement rally in Umm El-Fahm called for restoring the caliphate in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the local gallery exhibits Yoko Ono’s artworks.

and Arabs. “On the one hand you have this joint fate: The *katshya* doesn’t distinguish between Jewish and Arab neighborhoods, so you’d expect internal cohesion of Israeli society would be strengthened. But you see the opposite: there’s no clear-cut condemnation of Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah [by Arab citizens of Israel, but] growing rage at the killing [by Israeli soldiers] of civilians in Lebanon. This situation encapsulates the essence of the dilemma: My country is at war with my people.”

Helena Agbaria, a 36-year-old social worker in Umm El-Fahm, shared these mixed emotions as Hezbollah rockets hit Haifa. “Nasrallah makes me proud because he is an Arab man with power,” she told me. “But on the other hand, Haifa is not so far. I shop there and learn there.” Agbaria has lived in Washington, D.C., while her husband got an advanced degree. She’s also traveled abroad as part of an Israeli Jewish-Arab women’s peace delegation.

“I hate war,” Agbaria said. She was dressed modestly, with her head covered. “It’s not very easy to understand all these feelings. We have to get to an equal situation, because we feel discriminated against all the time. Sometimes I feel Israeli, but first of all I am Palestinian. I really feel it is a state only for Jews, although my kids study in a bilingual [Jewish-Arab] school. I believe and hope we can have a different life. I want my kids to be educated to another feeling.”

It’s the impulse for distinct definition *and* for greater civic and economic equity that defines the Umm El-Fahm sensibility. When I visited the city’s first private mall one day during the war, I met the owner, Hamed Abdel Latif, whose furniture factory showroom anchors the mall.

Latif insisted on taking me for a late-day meal at his mall’s Café Nana (no alcohol served). “Under this roof,” he boasted, “there is coexistence, Jewish and Arab businesses.” Though the war was raging, Jewish businessmen from the surrounding area shared the room with townspeople. The exuberant Latif is one of the wealthiest men in the town—and a major supporter of the Islamic movement. Still, he said, “We are part of the Israeli state, live by Israeli law, pay taxes. We are not separate at all.” Latif recalled that Olmert had committed the government to aiding in economic development. Indeed, permits recently had been issued for the first industrial zone in the region to benefit Umm El-Fahm and neighboring Kibbutz Megiddo.

“It took 15 years to get the approval here,” the mayor, Sheikh Hashem, told me. “Afula [the nearby Jewish city], which has two industrial zones, has 80 percent of its taxes from commerce and industry; in Umm El-Fahm 80 percent of taxes are from households. This is upside down.”

Much of life for Arabs in Israel can seem upside down. “Statistics show you what is happening to the Arab population in Israel,” said Dr. Sarah Husari-Mahamid, who was the first female doctor in Umm El-Fahm. “The percentage of deaths from chronic diseases is like a third world country, although they live in Israel. Now the state is putting in more resources to help the situation.”

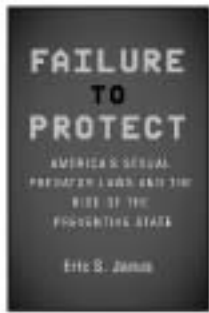
A family physician, Husari-Mahamid was schooled in St. Petersburg, which she still called Leningrad. “Before the 1960s, there were hardly any opportunities for Arabs to study,” she said. “Hadash sent some to socialist and communist countries.” Today,

she works in the health clinic in the town and teaches interns in a hospital in Kfar Sava, an upscale Jewish town.

A nonrevolutionary party that was tied to the Soviet Union, the Communist Party once was central to secular Arab life in Israel and served as a meeting place for intellectual and professional secular Jews and Arabs. As the god of communism failed, though, Arab nationalism, and then the god of Islam, rose in its place.

Hadash used to run Umm El-Fahm. The Northern Islamic Movement was voted in and the Communist coalition voted out in the late 1980s partly because “people were very disappointed regarding the lack of basic services,” said Yusef Jabareen, a Georgetown University-trained lawyer and Umm El-Fahm native son who teaches human-rights law at several Israeli universities. The Islamists, he said, had offered “not a religious agenda but a social agenda. People saw it as a well-organized and wealthy group that could advance the services and infrastructure.”

Jabareen, who backs the Communists, does not support the Islamists but said nonetheless, “If the [Israeli] government doesn’t like what the Islamic Movement is doing, it can only blame itself. We are older and bigger than the two surrounding Jewish towns. However, we still depend on them for health, courts, and social services. It’s not a marginal issue. People here suffer. A hospital is an urgent need. However, I can assure you that once the Islamic Movement establishes a hospital [the Islamists already provide medical services inside the




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main mosque], there will be reports in the media saying that they don't want to deal with the Israeli authorities."

Whether Islamists or Israel steps forward to provide services to Israeli Arabs will surely affect Israel's future. Governmental policies that diminish the divide between Jews and Arabs in Israel could create not only a less polarized nation, but also, in time, a diminished antipathy toward the Jewish state from a broader Arab public. "Israel has an opportunity to say, 'Yes this was neglect, but this is what we are planning to do,'" Rekhes observed. "If Israel will not do so, the Islamic movement will do it. They fill gaps." The Islamic Movement in Israel "is not monolithic," Rekhes continued. "It is a confused, screwed-up reality. It is a fluctuating situation. It changes every day and every month according to the upheavals in Israel and in the Israeli-Arab arena."

Much of the time, Arabs in Israel appear to inhabit a mishmash world where Islam meets globalization and a modern Jewish state. Take Fatachia Salim Agarabia. A social worker trained at Bar Ilan and Haifa universities, she was one of 17 children. Her father agreed to send her to university if it was religious, so he suggested Bar Ilan (which emphasizes Jewish Orthodoxy, not Islam). We met in her home, sitting barefoot before an open Koran. The first woman to drive a car in town, Agarabia identifies with what she termed "Islamic feminism. My husband knows Islam like my father did, and in Islam a woman should work and study," she said. Until visiting Mecca in 1992, she didn't dress modestly. "The first time I met Sheikh Raed I was wearing tight jeans and makeup, but he didn't try to influence me." In 1993, she agreed to head up social services for the town, where she teaches family planning and sex education.

"There's been a total revolution in the past 10 years," Agarabia continued, with "women going to study, to work, also globalization, television, and the Internet. There's no control over arranged marriages anymore with cell phones." She estimated that over 70 percent of the population is between 13 and 40 years old, then ran through the list of social and economic problems in the town—lack of housing, lack of jobs, young people not finishing school. When I asked about her running for office, she replied, "Although they adore me, Umm El-Fahm will not let it happen. It's the Arab [male] mentality."

"I feel schizophrenic," she sighed. "Morning with the Jews, afternoon with Christians and evening with Muslims. In the end what helps me get through is my belief in God."

IN THE WAKE OF LAST SUMMER'S WAR, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT pledged more funds to the Arab sector, and more Jewish philanthropic dollars are going there as well. Even the quasi-governmental Jewish Agency pledged funds to Israeli Arabs in the North, for first time ever. Israeli government policies have made a difference before, and a peace settlement between Israel and a future Palestine would make the most difference of all. "Israeli Arabs were devoted supporters of

[the] Oslo [accords], even euphoric," says sociologist Smooha. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak "Rabin gave them respect, consulted with them and made changes in discriminatory aspects of government allowances. When Rabin was assassinated, Arabs in Israel wept."

But now, there is much disappointment. There had been considerable hope in the Arab sector when Amir Peretz, a social democratic trade union leader of Moroccan Jewish origin, took over the Labor Party and entered the coalition government, but that hope eroded first with the handling of last summer's war and then with the government's embrace of Lieberman.

Yet if Arabs are ever to feel truly included inside Israel, change will have to reach not only beyond a repudiation of Lieberman but beyond economics and even a peace agreement between Israel and a future Palestine. Change may require some accommodation of minority rights by the Jewish state. As Jabareen drove me around Umm El-Fahm, I saw flags from Brazil and Italy, celebrating their World Cup soccer teams. But I didn't see

an Israeli flag. "That's part of the real problem that Arab citizens of Israel have with the symbols of the state: the flag, the national symbol [a Jewish star], the anthem [which includes words of Jewish longing for Zion]," Jabareen said. "It excludes them. Arabs in Israel can't identify with them. This is one of the crucial failures of Israeli institutions, the failure to adapt civil symbols that Arabs could identify with," he continued.

Haifa University's Smooha concurred: "Civic equality is not enough; you have to give them national minority rights. To be a Palestinian doesn't mean you are disloyal to the state, as 80 percent of Jews feel. The Arabs see being Palestinian as a legitimate identity but for Israeli Jews it is delegitimate. You have to recognize their right to struggle for Palestinian causes, against occupation, you have to recognize their political leadership."

"Listen," he stressed, "there is a fundamental contradiction between a Jewish and a democratic state and Israel needs to say we want two contradictory things so let's see what we can do to reduce the contradictions. The Arabs have a real stake in the system. How else can you explain that in Umm El-Fahm the Arabs don't want to be part of Palestine? Because they have a stake in Israeli democracy and the welfare state."

Smooha's assessment was echoed by one Umm El-Fahm resident, Mohammed Rabah-Aghbarieh, who, with degrees from the Hebrew University and the Technion, directs the Environmental Quality Unit for the Northern Triangle. "All the people here feel themselves as part of a modern lifestyle with daily possibilities and abilities that they want to realize," he said. "To a person, everyone wants to make things better in Israel—and stay here." **TAP**

Jo-Ann Mort writes frequently about Israel for The American Prospect, The Jewish Daily Forward and other publications. She is the co-author of Our Hearts Invented a Place: Can Kibbutzim Survive in Today's Israel?

*Though the war was
raging, Jewish and Arab
businessmen both frequented
Café Nana (no alcohol served)
at Umm El-Fahm's mall.
"Under this roof," Latif said,
"there is coexistence."*

Culture & Books

"In choosing to support good over evil, they fueled a distrust of the 'mainstream media' that over the years has only grown in virulence."

— PAGE 54



Endangered species? Will a local buyout save the *Times*?

MEDIA

TIMES OUT OF JOINT

In Los Angeles, profiteers and bean counters conspire to drag down a great American newspaper. Can local gazillionaires save it?

BY TODD GITLIN

LAST SUMMER, I MADE THE MISTAKE of asking a *Los Angeles Times* reporter how he felt about life in a wholly owned subsidiary of the Tribune Company. He made a sour face and said he was worried about his pension. Dinner was ruined for a while.

Reporters are used to holding their breath at the *Times*, where the editorial staff has been cut from 1,200 souls to 940, a decrease of more than 20 percent, in the course of the six years since Tribune bought out Times Mirror, which owned the *Times* and several other major papers. To be a survivor at the *L.A. Times*

is to be, well, *resilient*, says 28-year veteran staff writer Henry Weinstein, who specializes in legal affairs.

The *Times* has lurched from crisis to crisis for nearly a decade, since pre-Tribune CEO Mark Willes plunged the paper into an unseemly profit-sharing arrangement with the Staples Center arena. Willes, who lacked newspaper experience, did not win many reporter friends when he proposed to knock down the wall between the editorial and advertising departments. Publisher succeeded publisher, none of them enlarging the news hole or improving investigative or

foreign reporting. One staff writer told me that the big difference between layoffs by the old owners, the Chandler family, and layoffs by Tribune is that the Chandlers used to rent space in a hotel, bus all the pink-slipped staff over there, and gave them advice on everything from post-employment health care to therapy—a veritable out-of-a-job fair. Tribune, on the other hand, passed out the pink slips and told the departing to empty their desks by the end of the day.

Willes did triple the *Times Mirror* stock price while he was running the company, but was so widely excoriated that he exited, counting stock options. A few regimes later, the present-day *Times* staff stood proud of the paper's editor, Dean Baquet, who publicly refused to entertain any more staff cuts, causing employees to "take a lot of heart," in the words of the 34-year *Times* veteran, Tim Rutten, who writes a media column. The paper's publisher, Jeffrey M. Johnson, also refused to make further layoffs, and in October Tribune fired him for his pains. Then, on November 7—Election Day—Tribune fired Baquet. Another round of layoffs is now virtually assured.

Rumors fly about who might be in the market for the *Times*, with or without the rest of the Tribune empire, which includes, in dead-tree country, *Newsday*, *The Baltimore Sun*, the *Orlando Sentinel*, the South Florida *Sun-Sentinel*, *The Hartford Courant*, as well as the flagship *Chicago Tribune*.

Tribune had profits of 18 percent in 2004, but (Ken Auletta reported in *The New Yorker*) board members wanted more. Why not the moon?

It's a truth universally acknowledged that newspapers are a business in trouble. But to comprehend the *Times* situation, a good starting point is to jettison some conventional wisdom about the declining fortunes of newspapers. The 13

top publicly traded newspaper companies earned an average pretax profit margin of 19 percent as recently as 2003. What is true is that, as circulation declines across the board and newspapers fail to figure out how to make money from readers who are migrating online, the clamor arises for new business plans that newspapers have yet to devise. Most papers are clueless about how to make money online. When in doubt, management tends to panic and cut costs.

Scenarios of decline and fall are all that matters to the predatory investors who hold large stakes in companies like Tribune and Knight Ridder—the former Knight Ridder, that is, the chain that ranked second in circulation nationally last year and was forced to sell itself off

Why are the profits of 15 percent that Wall Street considered desirable in the 1990s considered pathetic now? It is an exceedingly odd thing about newspapers in the age of the corporate chain ownership: the assumption, widely touted in the business press, that newspapers ought to be making upwards of 20 percent—except when they do make those numbers, in which case the bar is raised. Where do such staggering goals come from? In 2006, the aerospace and defense sector of the Fortune 500 averaged 5.2 percent of revenue. In 2002, the figure for the top 10 drug companies—the most profitable sector in the Fortune 500—was a sweet 17 percent. Even oil and gas industry profits in 2005 amounted to a mere 8.2 percent of the companies' rev-

spend less time on investigations because such work requires they be dislodged from daily beats for months of work that might, in the end, prove fruitless. There's no way the current depletions can be spun as improved service to those newspaper stakeholders known as readers. Henry Weinstein says, "A lot of people come to me with stories they'd like me to write about. It was certainly easier to lateral stories to other people when we had a bigger staff. Personally, I look around the newsroom and I see very few people who aren't working hard. The library staff is cut back. My view is, we're into bone."

A number of private figures have expressed interest in buying the *Times* if Tribune were willing to spin it off. (In early November, Tribune told prospective bidders that it might want to do exactly that.) Among them: Hollywood music tycoon David Geffen, supermarket king Ron Burkle, and financier Eli Broad. Anyone who would be satisfied with a lower profit margin, as Geffen has been reported to say he would be, can expect a hearty welcome from the staff. "We understand that the paper has to make money," Weinstein says. "Nobody's a socialist. At a 10 percent profit margin, the *L.A. Times* could be phenomenally better. It could boost local coverage, and foreign." However uneasy some insiders are about Geffen or other prospective local buyers who might have their own interests to protect, Weinstein adds, "I can't remember another instance where somebody said he would buy the company and be willing to make less money." On November 8, Broad's and Burkle's companies tendered an offer for the entire Tribune Company.

Tim Rutten sees some light at the end of the Web. "Somebody will find a way," he says, "to monetize Web readership. Human avarice is endlessly ingenious. Who knows? Advertisers may find that they're not getting what they want online. They may gravitate back to print. It may dawn on advertisers that the only sites they can find for large, broad audiences are broadcast television and newspapers."

Overall, Rutten thinks, "the long ex-

Aerospace companies have a 5 percent profit margin, drug companies 17 percent. Newspapers go on life support when they make 20 percent.

in March because its profits languished in the low 20 percent range (far higher than the average firm's, but no matter).

This is how predatory investment works in the newspaper business these days. Go back one decade. In 1995, Wall Street saw Knight Ridder as an "underperformer." Company profits were estimated at 12.5 percent in 1994, its newspapers alone at 16.4 percent, but some were lagging—notably *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News*. Meanwhile, top-ranking Gannett was pulling in 21.3 percent.

Ten years later, the chain was making a profit upwards of 20 percent. Wall Street was still not impressed. Knight Ridder stock was in a hole. A \$32 billion money management firm, Private Capital Management, which owned 19 percent of the company's shares and invested heavily in other newspaper chains, was grumpy, so much so as to issue an ultimatum—sell the company *right now* and make us more money or we'll put new directors on the board who will do exactly that. Obediently, Knight Ridder sold itself off to the McClatchy chain, which proceeded to offload several papers.

enues, according to ExxonMobil. So what gives? Why do investors consider newspapers holes drying up? Why don't they take the money and rest?

The most plausible explanation is that go-go investors are pursuing what newspaper consultants call a "harvest strategy." They assume that metropolitan newspapers are "mature" businesses facing dwindling growth, so that the best way to realize value is to pump up short-term profits. Some harvest—it sounds more like scorched earth, or, more kindly, capitalizing on expectations of diminishing returns. If papers are dying, why not scrape profits out of them to the max? Only the family stockholders of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, heirs who occupy an exclusive tier of stock ownership, can insulate their firms from such fierce market pressure—sometimes, up to a point.

In general, investors are not in the resting game. They don't care when companies are in black ink. They want it blacker.

WHAT'S THE RESULT FOR THE *L.A. Times*? Fewer pages of news, reported by fewer people who perforce

periment with corporate ownership has pretty much run aground. Maybe the corporations know it now—they can't figure out any way to square their obligations to communities as newspaper proprietors with their obligations to their stockholders. The newspaper business is a great business for people who want to make a lot of money over a long time. It's a lousy business for people who want to make more money than what their greediest stockholder wants to make next quarter."

"I don't have a Manichaeian view," he adds. "I can't say that people at Tribune are bad people. They're caught between conflicting loyalties. They're trying to do the best job balancing they can. At the end of the day, I'm just not sure it can be done." **TAP**

Todd Gitlin is a professor of journalism and sociology at Columbia University. His latest book is The Intellectuals and the Flag.

BOOKS

HEROES, WEREN'T THEY?

THE RACE BEAT: THE PRESS, THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE, AND THE AWAKENING OF A NATION BY GENE ROBERTS AND HANK KLIBANOFF

Knopf, 518 pages, \$30.00

BY DAVID GREENBERG

ON FEBRUARY 6, 1956, PETER Kihss of *The New York Times* was covering the enrollment of the first black student, Autherine Lucy, at the University of Alabama. Mobs of racist thugs swarmed the campus, harassing her whenever she left a classroom, and late that day they encircled an older black man who had come to drive Lucy home. Impulsively, Kihss moved to protect the driver, and when the crowd closed in, he abandoned journalistic protocol entirely. "I'm a reporter for *The New York Times*, and I've gotten a wonderful impression of the University of Alabama," he threatened. "Now I'll be glad to take on the whole student body, two at a time." The mob spared him, while Lucy scooted out the building's back door into a patrol car.

As Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff show in their bracing new history, *The Race Beat*, the stakes of the civil-rights movement forced many reporters who covered it to choose sides. They found themselves faced with impossible professional, political, and moral dilemmas, with human decency often pitted against journalistic norms. In the process, they challenged professional conventions, aided the cause of equal rights, and, in their own way, made history.

Roberts, who appears as a character in

this book's final chapters, is a longtime *New York Times* reporter and editor; Klibanoff is an editor at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. In lesser hands, the doings of a bunch of scribblers and cameramen would amount to a monograph, a sliver of the big picture. But Roberts and Klibanoff, who have exhaustively researched the subject, use the prism of the reporters' experiences to enhance understanding of the main storyline. That they succeed in demonstrating the media's important role in these events is no mean feat. Despite our tendency to endow journalists with the hypnotic power to fool a people into going to war or decide an election, the media's effect on public opinion is usually far less direct or potent. In this case, however, it was real. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil-rights leaders knew that uprooting entrenched racism required stirring the conscience of the nation and that only the mass media could do so.

Befitting its influence, *The New York Times* commands large swaths of the narrative, but Roberts and Klibanoff deal with the whole press. They show us the crusading black newspapers such as the *Baltimore Afro-American*, which spotlighted Southern injustices when no one else would; the big-time television networks that beamed the drama around the

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country (as well as the two-bit local stations that tried to thwart them); glossies like *Jet* and *Life* whose photojournalism wordlessly shocked the middle class; even, in passing, intellectual journals like *The Reporter*, whose talented young correspondents—David Halberstam was one—exercised an influence beyond their publications' small readerships.

The rich narrative eludes easy summary, but it has a clear beginning, middle, and

armature for Southerners flouting federal edicts. Others, despite striving to report evenhandedly, couldn't help being moved to write sympathetically of the black activists who were risking their lives. Some journalists paid a price. CBS in effect fired Howard K. Smith for refusing to bend to William Paley's will and agree, as Smith put it, "that truth is to be found somewhere between right and wrong, equidistant between good and evil."

itly state the conclusion that much of their evidence suggests: Today's right-wing bogeyman of "the liberal media" originated in this struggle. Coverage of the movement convinced much of the white South that the networks, papers like the *Times*, and magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* were hostile and biased interlopers that told only one side of the story.

The ensuing resentment found various modes of expression. Few correspondents left the South without a broken bone, a bad bruise, or at least a terrible scare as a souvenir. Some were less successful than Peter Kihss in keeping mobs at bay; Paul Guihard of the Agence France-Presse was murdered at point-blank range by segregationists trying to stop James Meredith from enrolling at the University of Mississippi in 1962. But Roberts and Klibanoff also detail more subtle ways in which hostility toward the national media was voiced. In one fascinating section, they relate a conspiracy hatched among white Southern editors who belonged to the Associated Press to try to force the wire service to write about crimes by blacks in the North as avidly as it spotlighted the violence of the white South.

Ultimately, politicians—notably Alabama Governor George Wallace—capitalized on this resentment. Wallace cited journalists alongside pointy-headed intellectuals and the Supreme Court in his litany of elitist villains who were screwing the little guy. Richard Nixon, too, picked up the strategy, which he bequeathed to men like Roger Ailes and Karl Rove. Thus, while Roberts and Klibanoff are right to celebrate these journalists for bravely documenting the cruelty of Jim Crow and helping to hasten its demise, their legacy is more ambiguous. For in choosing to support right over wrong, good over evil, they fueled a distrust and resentment of what we now call "the mainstream media" that has, over the years, only grown in virulence. **TAP**

David Greenberg is a professor of history and journalism and media studies at Rutgers University. His books include Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image and Calvin Coolidge (December 2006).



Getting the Story: A reporter stops Thurgood Marshall. Aurtherine Lucy (rear)

end. At the outset, the white press largely ignored Jim Crow and the movement. Typical was John Popham of *The New York Times*, a genteel Virginian who preferred seeking out optimistic "voices of sanity" across the South to reporting on the grievances of oppressed blacks or the stubborn racism of much of the white population.

Soon, however, a younger generation of reporters eclipsed the Pophams. From the mid-1950s to the early 1960s—starting with the murder of Emmett Till and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and continuing through the sit-ins and Freedom Rides—the press stepped up its coverage. Yet political life was becoming polarized, making a stance of neutrality hard to maintain. Some journalists, such as James Kilpatrick of the *Richmond News Leader* (later to gain fame as the house curmudgeon on *60 Minutes*' "Point-Counterpoint"), tried to provide an intellectual

In the final phase of the story, as the movement came to a climax, television came to the fore. The new medium delivered the raw images of brutality and injustice into American living rooms, destroying any last support for Jim Crow outside the South. TV's influence culminated in its depiction of the events at Selma, Alabama, in March 1965, when ABC interrupted its Sunday Night Movie—*Judgment at Nuremberg*—to show Sheriff Jim Clark commanding his troopers, "Get those goddamned niggers," before his men clubbed and gassed a column of protesters gathered to demand their right to vote. Five months later, Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, declaring, "We shall overcome."

If the civil-rights movement represented one of American journalism's finest hours, it carried a cost. It's a shame that Roberts and Klibanoff don't explic-

BOOKS

THE GOOD IN GOOD POLITICS

THE MORAL CENTER BY DAVID CALLAHAN Harcourt, 260 pages, \$24.00

BY DEBORAH STONE

EVER SINCE THE 2004 EXIT POLLS, progressives have been puzzling over how to reclaim so-called values voters. Or, to put the problem another way, how can Democrats satisfy Americans' interests (the economy, stupid, and bring those troops home alive) while also appealing to their desires for moral direction? In *The Moral Center*, David Callahan tackles this conundrum with some fresh and provocative insights in the hope of advancing, as he says in the preface, "a different way of thinking about values."

Callahan accepts that most people worry about morality when they think about politics. Conservatives have dis-

torted moral discussion, however, and reduced moral concerns to a narrow set of fleshy hot-button issues while ignoring justice and equality and giving little but lip service to compassion. But liberals, Callahan argues, have failed to recognize, understand, and speak to the "moral anxiety" citizens feel. Ordinary Americans, he says, "can't shake the feeling that American life is getting meaner and more degraded, and that everyone is out for themselves." Add to this his personal "sense of constantly being tugged away from my real values." After moving to New York City, Callahan found himself coveting fabulous townhouses and tuning out the beggars on the subway, all the while working for Dēmos,

a liberal think tank he helped start. (Disclosure: Although I am not personally acquainted with him, Callahan, among other accomplishments, was the *Prospect's* first managing editor in 1990.)

Callahan translates this personal dissonance into a remarkable sensor for the moral anxieties of middle America. His first political insight is elegantly simple: People are troubled not only about what's going on outside in the public sphere, but also about what's happening to the internal moral compass in each of us. They're worried about whether they are good people, whether their children will grow up to be good, and whether our social environment permits and encourages people to be good.

Throughout the book, he shows that religious conservatives speak to moral anxieties. Can parents, schools, and churches shape children's values any longer in the face of television, the Internet, movies, video games, and consumer culture? Are the rich and powerful held to the same standards of behavior as everyone else? Is hard work rewarded and really a path to

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independence and security? Does anyone care about the poor? The solutions conservatives offer may be extreme—sexual abstinence for the unmarried, back to the kitchen for mom, crude censorship for the media, grotesquely harsh punishment for minor infringements and wrist slaps for corporate disasters, to name a few—but at least they say something's wrong and offer the possibility of changing our culture. Their appeal, Callahan says, resides not in their policy prescriptions, but in their moral concern, their hope, and their call to goodness. "Whatever you may think about Christian conservatives at least they offer a plan to get America on a different moral path," he writes.

Callahan's second political insight is perhaps obvious, but clever nonetheless. There's a "vacuum in the center" of moral debate. On every issue, the right and left have staked out extreme positions. Surely there's a moral position on sexuality between abstinence and it's-up-to-you-what-you-do-with-your-body. If Callahan is right that more and more people find the conservative message attractive

merely because it addresses morality, liberals can win some of those people back by staking out centrist moral positions.

Positioning one's platform as the middle between two extremes is one of the rudiments of political strategy, so the idea of locating and occupying the moral center is strategically appealing. But is it intellectually and politically workable? Popular notions of morality, as well as the right's disdain for "moral relativism," rest on Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative. Something is either right or wrong, and everyone should either do it or not do it, always. In practice, though, there are very few questions on which Americans can agree on a moral absolute. Take almost any policy debate and thinking people are apt to become utilitarians, balancing costs and benefits and weighing trade-offs. They're apt to perceive and tolerate ambiguity, too. They might, for example, see abortion as a tragic decision, but also as a liberating and benevolent one that helps ensure that children will be well-loved and cared for. So much for bright lines.

At times, Callahan seems to recognize this dilemma, but he doesn't face it head on. In a reproachful tone, he blames liberals for not having moral absolutes. After stating that comprehensive sex education is superior to abstinence-only programs at delaying teenage sex and reducing pregnancy and disease, he says disdainfully, "Abstinence crusaders are rolling over Planned Parenthood types who have social science on their side but offer no moral bottom line." Yet most of Callahan's own proposals entail moral jawboning about personal responsibility combined with lots of individual freedom, more social spending, and punishment only for transgression of the law. There are (thank heavens) few moral bottom lines in this book.

Instead, Callahan articulates what he thinks are mainstream moral beliefs, such as marriage is a good thing, "abortion is bad," people should honor family ties, crimes should be punished no matter who commits them, the poor and vulnerable should be helped, people should be able to earn personal freedom through hard work, and everyone should make some

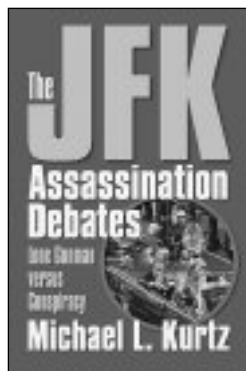
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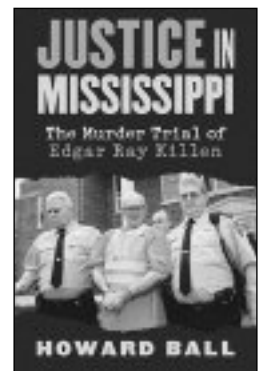


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—William Doyle, author of *An American Insurrection*

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sacrifice or service to a “common higher purpose.” Then, under the rubric of supporting these moral values, he pulls some standard remedies from the liberal medicine cabinet. For example, he’s big on social insurance but packages it as something that “will make it easier for people to pursue personal freedom through entrepreneurial risk-taking.” To address sexuality and family preservation, he proposes better sex education and health insurance for contraceptives; economic supports for working parents; marriage education and responsible fatherhood initiatives; and better regulation of corporate media. The question in my mind is whether packaging moderate remedies in moral language can satisfy the primitive hunger for moral bottom lines.

Callahan’s third insight is the most hard-hitting. The essence of morality is considering others’ interests as well as one’s own, but moralists on the right “refuse to confront the force that increasingly fans an extreme ethos of self-interest, namely our free-market economy.” Early in the book Callahan warns, “We ride the tiger of selfishness. Untamed, it will eat everything we care about.” In chapters on sex, family, media, crime and punishment, work, poverty, and patriotism, he deftly outlines how the unbridled pursuit of self-interest in a market economy overwhelms concern for others and the subsidiary moral values that people say they care so much about. Take the media. Many people are revolted by the sex and violence of popular culture and frightened for their children, but sex and violence draw viewers (ironically, especially young adults of parenting age), and large audiences draw ad revenue, which feeds the commercial bottom line.

Take corporate crime. The Food and Drug Administration fails to stop pharmaceutical companies from peddling harmful drugs. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration looks the other way while employers allow their workers to be killed in unsafe workplaces. Callahan sees the extreme self-interest at work here but thinks it can be controlled by “better enforcement of existing laws that protect the safety, health, and finances of Americans.” Not bloody likely. That tiger now owns the FDA and OSHA and virtu-

ally writes their regulatory standards.

If Callahan has failed to offer convincing methods of taming the capitalist tiger of selfishness, he has faced it, and that in itself is an act of courage for anyone who hopes to be heard in American political debate. He may not have found a moral center, either, but he has pointed us to-

ward something far more important, a moral core composed of concern for others. This is how liberals can call upon people to be good. **TAP**

Deborah Stone’s next book on altruism and public life will be published by Nation Books in late 2007.

BOOKS

RESTRAINING THE JUDGES

THE MOST DEMOCRATIC BRANCH: HOW THE COURTS SERVE AMERICA

BY JEFFREY ROSEN Oxford University Press, 256 pages, \$25.00

BY GORDON SILVERSTEIN

WORRIED ABOUT STEM-CELL research? Concerned about education, affirmative action, gay marriage, environmental quality, and the criminal-justice system? Do you find campaign fund-raising objectionable? Want to change the way congressional district lines are drawn? And just who did win the 2000 election?

Once upon a time these issues would have been fought out primarily through elections, in Congress, and from one state legislature to another. No longer. Even when legislation is adopted, it seems only the prelude to a lawsuit that will ultimately determine public policy. Little wonder then that the struggle over replacing William Rehnquist and Sandra Day O’Connor on the Supreme Court sparked intense debate.

The New Republic’s legal affairs editor, Jeffrey Rosen, thinks the courts have assumed too much power, and in his new book he puts the blame squarely on the justices of the Supreme Court. Their unilateral determination to take the nation in directions not supported by a majority of the public has led, in Rosen’s view, to a polarized politics and impotent Congress. Instead of imposing their constitutional interpretations on the other branches, he argues, judges should generally adhere to a broad national consensus on the meaning of the Constitution and overturn laws and executive decisions only when the Constitution is unambiguously and flagrantly violated.

Rosen’s book joins a small but growing chorus of calls for judicial modesty from liberals who recognize that instead of moving from liberal activism to traditional conservatism, the Court is close to tipping over to conservative activism, if it isn’t already there. A *judicially* conservative court hews closely to precedent and upholds the Court’s own status quo—something that liberals could probably accept, as the standing precedents are mostly the liberal rulings of the 1960s and 1970s. This legacy creates the through-the-looking-glass world where movement conservatives denounce a true judicial conservative such as David Souter for adhering to the status quo, while ideological conservatives such as Clarence Thomas haven’t the slightest hesitation about reversing decades of precedent to return the law to the era before the New Deal.

Rosen’s argument is with all judicial activism, liberal and conservative alike. The bulk of his articulate and thoughtful book takes us through a historical parade of cautionary tales, ranging from the Supreme Court’s overreach on slavery in the run-up to the Civil War, through Reconstruction, the Great Depression, and on into busing, abortion, and the redrawing of political districts in more recent years. These cases, Rosen argues, demonstrate that when the Court has gotten too far in front or behind a national consensus on the meaning and limits of the Constitution, it has done great damage to the nation and to the judiciary itself.

That these have been powerfully divisive issues is beyond debate. But does that mean the Court should simply bow out of the fight? Rosen argues for what he calls “democratic constitutionalism”—by which he means “judges should defer to the views of the political branches and the states about constitutional issues in the face of intense opposition or uncertainty.” The Court’s prime objective is to “promote democratic values,” and it should strive to enforce “only those values that national majorities are willing to recognize as fundamental.” To do otherwise will only further inflame partisan and ideological divisions.

Rosen’s argument has a distinguished lineage, stretching back to justices such as Oliver Wendell Holmes and Felix Frankfurter and legal scholars led by Alexander Bickel. But as important as the democratic process is for Rosen, he does not endorse scholars such as John Hart Ely who see the court as distinctively charged with ensuring that the political process itself functions democratically. Here Rosen hews far closer to Frankfurter, who was loath to see the courts enter what he called the “political thicket.”

Rosen makes two distinct but related claims. “Democratic constitutionalism,” he says, is in the nation’s best interest. And it is also in the Court’s institutional interest in preserving its own authority.

The first claim forces us to think a bit about why our system assigns so much power to unelected, insulated, and isolated federal judges, who hold their jobs for life. “The complete independence of the courts,” Alexander Hamilton writes in *The Federalist* number 78, “is peculiarly essential in a limited Constitution”—that is, a government prohibited from doing certain things. If there are to be limits on the government’s authority, there needs to be a relatively disinterested party to determine what those limits are. Independent courts are just the sort of institution for this task.

But, in Rosen’s view, decisions about what falls within or outside the constitutional limits are so difficult and inherently controversial that judges should

pronounce a law void only when it fails not just one theory of constitutional interpretation, but many of them: “Judges should be hesitant to strike down laws unless many of the traditional tools of constitutional interpretation—text, original understanding, historical traditions, previous judicial precedents, current constitutional consensus, and pragmatic considerations—seem to argue in favor of invalidation.”

But how can judges remain true to their oath of office if they honestly believe a law does not square with the Constitution even under a single theory? Here is where the question of the judiciary’s institutional interest comes in. The courts have no enforcement powers. To avoid the risk that their rulings might be ignored, judges need to think strategically and take into account, not just the case itself, but its political context. Institutional prudence, Rosen argues, is the reason that the justices themselves should choose a more modest approach to their role. Otherwise they risk the courts’ legitimacy.

Legitimacy is the watchword of this book. According to Rosen, when judges act unilaterally, their rulings are “likely to be ineffective, to provoke backlashes, and ultimately to threaten the legitimacy of the courts.” He offers his parade of cautionary historical tales as evidence for this claim. In *Dred Scott*, for example, Chief Justice Roger Taney “squandered the Court’s carefully constructed reserves of legitimacy.” In the 1960s and 1970s, court-ordered school busing aimed at ending segregated schools generated massive resistance, and 30 years later public schools in America are as segregated as ever. Getting far ahead of a national consensus about abortion, Rosen says, undermined the Court’s legitimacy. And perhaps most dramatically, stepping in to end the struggle over the vote recount in Florida in the 2000 election emptied the Court’s legitimacy bank account.

Rosen is far from alone in thinking that the Court’s legitimacy is its most important currency. Commentators, journalists, lawyers, academics, and some of the justices themselves have viewed it the same way, while others are more concerned to put it to work. In a speech after

the decision in *Bush v. Gore*, Justice Antonin Scalia declared that the Court’s legitimacy shouldn’t be regarded as a “shiny piece of trophy armor,” but rather as something to be used and “sometimes dented in the service of the public.”

For all the worries about the Court’s legitimacy, how easily dented and damaged is it? Research by political scientists, including Gregory Caldeira and James Gibson as well as Dion Farganis, strongly suggests that the Court’s legitimacy is extremely resilient. Rosen’s historical cases notwithstanding, the Court’s power has never been seriously threatened. Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson railed against Chief Justice John Marshall’s brilliant decisions, but bluster was about as far as they went. Abraham Lincoln condemned the Court’s decision in *Dred Scott* but never questioned the Court’s authority. And Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1937, fresh from the second greatest landslide reelection in American history, failed miserably when he attempted to curb the Court. Fifteen years later, Harry Truman insisted that the president’s power to seize vital industries in wartime was “inherent in the Constitution,” yet when the Court ordered him to return steel mills he had seized in the midst of the Korean War, Truman did so without a struggle.

And the list goes on: Dwight Eisenhower ordered the troops into Little Rock to enforce a Supreme Court desegregation order he thought a mistake; Richard Nixon surrendered the White House tapes in the midst of Watergate, knowing full well it meant the end of his presidency, and Al Gore accepted the “finality” of the Court’s decision in 2000.

But if legitimacy concerns really aren’t much of a restraint on the Court, what check is there? If we want judicial restraint, the answer is not to convince those already sitting on the bench to reverse course and stand down from the fight. The answer is to appoint and confirm judges with a more modest view of the judicial power. And that is something only the president and the Senate can do. Nowhere does the Constitution say that judicial nominees can refuse to answer the Senate’s questions. The Senate must assert its independent power,

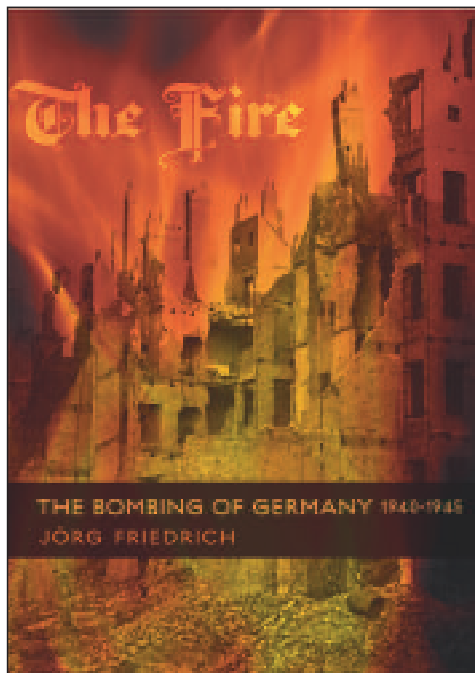
and if nominees aren't responsive, the Senate should reject them.

And if we want judges who will give Congress some leeway, it wouldn't hurt to have a few who understand the elected branches. Where once the Court was replete with former senators and governors, none of its current members has ever run for public office, and just two (Clarence Thomas and Stephen Breyer) have even briefly worked on Capitol Hill.

Of course, once confirmed, justices may stray from their earlier convictions and commitments. But the courts remain just one of three co-equal branches of government. The judiciary is not the "most democratic branch," nor was it meant to be. That title and role belong to Congress. Rosen is right that on a host of controversial topics, from abortion to flag burning to gay marriage, members of Congress are delighted to have courts take the heat and the responsibility. But this is not the judges' fault. Much of the problem lies in Congress. Consider the reaction of Arlen Specter, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, to the proliferation of presidential signing statements under George W. Bush. Rather than drag the cabinet through hearings, cut budgets, battle the president on television, and block his priorities, Specter introduced legislation that would allow Congress to *sue the president* for exceeding his constitutional authority by gutting laws passed by Congress.

Focusing on judicial imperialism alone is not now, nor has it ever been, the right way to frame the problem. Captivated as they were by Isaac Newton's theories of mechanics, the Founders created a complex, clanking, interdependent system. To make it work, the legislative branch cannot be the passive instrument of the executive, nor dependent on the kindness of judges—it needs to exert a force of its own, true to its democratic role. If we want a more modest Court, we must have a stronger Congress. **TAP**

Gordon Silverstein is assistant professor of political science at the University of California, Berkeley, and the author of *How Law Kills Politics* (forthcoming from W.W. Norton).



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Vicca With a W

BY HAROLD MEYERSON

WHEN I TALK TO MYSELF, I SOUND LIKE AN OLD Jew. This is not because I am all too quickly actually becoming an old Jew, mind you. It's that the voice I use to argue with and amuse myself is my grandparents'—all of them Russian Jews who came to America

about 100 years ago.

And how did my grandparents sound? Consider the following exchange I had with my grandmother, whom we called "Bubba," in my mother's backyard in the late 1970s—a time when Bubba's hearing was failing, and my cousin Claire, with her cat, Wicca, was staying with my mom. As the scene begins, Wicca emerges from the bushes.

Me: Bubba, this is Wicca.

Bubba: Ticca?

Me: No, Wicca.

Bubba: Ricca?

Me: No, Bubba, it starts with a "W."

Bubba: Oh—Wicca!

I was reminded of Vicca with a W by a collection of Yiddish-accent comic songs originally recorded between 1905 and 1922 that have recently been remastered and re-released on a CD with the in-your-face title of *Jewface*. The album reminds us, if we need reminding, how deeply and crudely ethnic American popular culture has often been, and how complex the uses to which that ethnicity has been put.

Some of the earliest recordings on *Jewface* are up to their *pupick* in beyond-the-pale stereotypes. It was a duo of non-Jewish songwriters who came up with "When Mose with his Nose Leads the Band." But "Cohen Owes Me Ninety-Seven Dollars"—the story of Old Man Rosenthal, who, on his deathbed, tells his son which deadbeat creditors to go after, until he is so energized by his own greed

that he recovers—was written by Irving Berlin. Still, Berlin, who was much the most successful American songwriter during the heyday of comic ethnic songs, was an equal-opportunity stereotyper. In his song "Sweet Italian Love" (the lyric to which appears in my most prized book, *The 1915 Home Correspondents School Guide to Writing for Vaudeville*), he wrote: "When you squeeza yo' gal and she no say please 'Stoppa' / When you gotta 20 kids whatta call you 'Poppa' / ... When you kissa yo' pet / And it's like a spaghetti / 'At's Italian love!'"

In the later recordings on *Jewface*, the comedy grows more complex. American-born children of immigrants, Fannie Brice in particular, storm the halls of high culture and Euro-pomposity with outrageously accented and inflected Yiddishized English. In one Ziegfeld Follies sketch, Brice entered, to great fanfare and in royal regalia, as Madame de Pompadour, turned to the audience and said in her most dulcet Delancy Street tones, "I'm a bedd voman—but I'm demm good company." An emblematic child of the Lower East Side, Brice ap-

propriated her parents' immigrant marginality to tear down—you name it—conventional Broadway spectacle, or high melodrama, or tales of the official culture. It's the same comic stance that Mel Brooks revived 45 years later with the 2,000-year-old man.

One of the surprises on *Jewface* is two 1920 Yiddishized comic songs by Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby, who later became famous as the Marx Brothers' songwriters. Groucho himself had started in vaudeville with a vaguely German-Jewish character, and when he performed at Carnegie Hall in his 80s, he revived one such dialect tune from his youth: "It's better to run to Toronto / Than to live in a place you don't vant to." By the time Kalmar and Ruby teamed up with Groucho, their mutual assault on the bourgeois propriety had lost its accent, but its attitude remained that of New York street kids demonstrating both their mastery and disdain of the dominant culture. For that matter, a similar attitude infuses the current-day work of the great Latino comedy troupe Culture Clash. In a nation of immigrants, this is what comedy is.

And this Yiddishization that goes on within me—inflecting the world, so to speak—is plainly about attitude as much as anything else. My skeptical attitude. The attitude that sustained and amused my immigrant forebears and their kids, an attitude they applied to the world and themselves. According to family legend, one of my mother's cousins once told her mother, my Great Aunt Gussie, that she was getting a sitter for her little son rather than continue to leave him every afternoon with my great aunt, because the toddler was starting to speak English with a Yiddish accent he had obviously picked up from Gussie. "Ah don't detect it," said Gussie in the thickest accent imaginable. That's the voice I hear inside my head. **TAP**

